

# TEMPLETON.

BY HARRIET J. BOWLES.

"Do you know Templeton?" said a gentleman to his companion, as they rode into the Park, "yonder he goes on that spirited bay—too fine an animal by half for such a fellow."

"Slightly,—but I never knew, Stanly, that you did not like him. I've always heard that he was a gentleman, and withal a clever companion."

"Oh! I knew him at the University, where he always affected learning. I hate your scholars as I hate the plague. And now he has set up for a fine gentleman, and a dandy, forsooth, the contemptible puppy."

"Well, there is something in hearing both sides. I don't know him at all, but his friends say he is only a polished gentleman, and you magnify him into a fop. But, as you were classmates, you ought to know him."

"I do. And, by St. George, there he is at the side of my sister. Will he never cease his attentions to her? I'll bet any thing now he's a coward; and to settle it I shall insult him. He pay attention to Louisa!—I'll have a word to say on that point."

At the words Stanly spurred his horse forward, and soon reached his sister, who seemed deeply engaged in conversation with Templeton. The brother did not hesitate an instant, but seizing his sister's rein with some violence, he drew it from Templeton's hold, and in a voice in which passion had already attained the mastery, insisted on the other leaving her side.

Templeton looked confounded, and the young lady besought her brother, as eloquently as woman's eyes can speak, to desist, and, as a last resource, put her horse at a brisk canter, leaving the excited young gentlemen to settle the dispute as they best might; but not without the most lively fears for the issue. Nor were those fears without foundation. Templeton soon evinced that he was not wanting in spirit, though the passion of Stanly forbade, from the first, any hope of an accommodation. Templeton, indeed, endured the insults of the brother as long as he could, seeming indisposed to quarrel with a relative of Louisa, but at length he was forced to take notice of Stanly's remarks, and high words ensued, which ended with a tacit understanding that the difficulty should be settled by a duel.

The night of the foregoing *fracas*, a large party had assembled at the house of a noble friend of one of the belligerent parties, at which Louisa Stanly chanced to be a guest, and hearing her own name frequently repeated in the course of conversation, her anxiety so far overcame her scruples, that she ventured to address a gentleman whom she observed had but lately quitted a group of his companions, where it was plain to

distinguish, her name formed the prominent subject of discussion.

"Ha!" exclaimed Captain Alcroft, acknowledging her salutation with a very polite bow, "it gives me sincere pleasure to meet you; I——"

"Captain," said the lady, "will you enlighten me as to the cause of my name being so much in request to-night; wherever I turn I can distinguish nothing but my name, and some young ladies, whose party I left but now to accost you, are so mysteriously silent and ambiguous to my inquiries, that I really feel somewhat uncomfortable; pray tell me, is it any thing in which my brother is concerned?"

"Why—yes—that is, your brother and Templeton. You know Lawrence Templeton?"

"Oh, dear me, yes," said the fair girl, recalling to mind the afternoon's ride, and trembling for the result of her inquiries. "What of Templeton, Captain?"

"Why," said her companion, humorously, "that I think him, notwithstanding the effeminate graces he sometimes puts on, to be a deuced pleasant fellow; and what does Miss Stanly think?" said the Captain, archly.

"Oh, that he is very well, certainly; but come, Captain, will you please to satisfy a lady's inquiries, or must I seek the information I wish elsewhere?"

The Captain apologised, and proceeded to narrate the afternoon's subsequent adventure, which was but just concluded, when, feigning slight indisposition as the cause, Miss Stanly ordered her carriage immediately, and ere it had been announced, the trembling young lady had eagerly descended to the hall, where she stood waiting its arrival, scarcely conscious of the presence of the numerous servants. "We couldn't get through the rank, Miss," said the footman, at length appearing, and respectfully touching his laced hat, in reply to her reproof at the delay. After giving the word "home," she sprang into the carriage, and a few moments afterwards alighted at the family residence in —— square.

Louisa Stanly was a young lady with a highly cultivated mind, and had received an education commensurate with the position she held in society; she was at once accomplished and beautiful, and possessed of an equally susceptible nature. It cannot, therefore, be made a matter of surprise that one, young, handsome, and well-bred as Templeton, and, like herself, the possessor of a richly cultivated intellect, and a deportment highly polished from constant intercourse with the best society, should have made considerable advances in her youthful affections. There existed, indeed, a natural and a warm passion in the hearts of these lovers—a passion which, hitherto, had been kept secret from the families of either, and of which Stanly himself had never entertained the slightest idea until the unfortunate discovery and *rencontre* in the park.

Stanly was quietly seated at the breakfast table on

the following morning, busily engaged in scanning the pages of the "*Post*," which a servant had just laid on the table, when the same servant re-entered and announced Captain C——. Stanly appeared to muse for a moment, as though striving to recall the name, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he exclaimed—"Oh, ah! let me see, Templeton's friend, the scurvy rascal, I recollect. Tell the Captain I'll be with him immediately." The servant bowed and retired. Stanly rose from the table, leaving his mother and sister to wonder at, and surmise the reason of so early a visit.

"Surely, my dear mamma," exclaimed the young lady, after a silence of some minutes, "the visit of Captain C—— has no connection with the unpleasant affair of yesterday; tell me," she repeated, pausing anxiously for a reply, "what *do* you really think? do pray answer me, dear mamma."

Lady Stanly, who, until this moment, had been busily occupied with an entertaining article in the paper that her son had previously been perusing, suddenly threw it on one side, exclaiming somewhat peevishly, "really, my love, you seem perfectly concerned in this matter; one would imagine, from the nervous excitement you appear to suffer, that you apprehend some dire calamity is the inevitable consequence. Set your fears at rest, silly girl; remain perfectly assured that Templeton has neither the moral courage to say any thing more about the matter, nor the physical courage to resent the injury he has received, if injury it be. By the bye, my dear girl, I have, I think, great reason to be displeased with the freedom you have permitted to Mr. Templeton."

"My dear mamma," cried the lovely girl, bursting into tears, "you are extremely unkind, and I think you do Mr. Templeton great injustice to suppose he would for a moment forget the position he holds as a gentleman, or that he would calmly submit to the gross insults of yesterday, without demanding reparation at my brother's hand."

"You *love* Mr. Templeton, then," rejoined Lady Stanly.

"My own dear mamma," said the beautiful creature, sinking at her mother's feet, "I will not deceive you, I do, indeed, *love* him," she continued imploringly hiding her features in her mother's robe.

"What the deuce is the matter with Louisa?" exclaimed Stanly, re-entering the room.

The weeping girl rose, exclaiming with passionate grief, while regarding her brother imploringly, "he has challenged you—I know he has, and you have accepted it; is it not so?"

"Challenged who? accepted what? What does my sister mean," replied Stanly, affecting surprise. "Well," he added, after a pause, "the fellow *has* had the *hardiesse* to send Captain C—— with a message! Who'd have thought it, not I."

"And you have accepted it?" inquiringly she asked.

"Of course; and have agreed to meet him three days hence. Oh, never mind," said he, "he's a shocking bad shot—can't hit a haystack at twenty paces! why, my dear mother, I could let the daylight into him at thirty the first fire, *tol de rol*."

"Horrible! remember, Sir," said Lady Stanly, rising from her seat, "if you *do* meet him, I will *never* forgive you. Heavens! you have killed Louisa—you have, cold-hearted boy."

The tender object of her mother's solicitude, unable to control the powerful effects which her brother's announcement had wrought on her already excited feelings, had swooned, and like a marble statue, lay extended on the couch, whither she had flown to indulge in an agony of grief.

Stanly had intentionally deceived his mother with regard to the time he was to meet Templeton, for it had been arranged that they were to settle the affair on the following morning, and the meeting was to take place in a field in the neighborhood of Battersea. Accordingly, without arousing the household, he repaired to a spot where his seconds and a surgeon, together with the carriage in which they intended to proceed, were already in waiting; and the party set off.

It was a beautiful morning in June, at about the hour of half past five, that the party proceeded over the Thames by way of Battersea bridge; the sun shot forth his clear bright rays, clothing the face of nature in one universal smile of gladness, right welcome to the heart—the fresh invigorating breeze from the noble river—the sweet odors of the new-mown hay, wafted to the grateful sense

—By lightest zephyrs borne  
From sunny meads."

Earth seemed to have put on, as she usually does, at this heavenly season, her fairest aspect—the green fields sent forth their rich incense, filling the air with ineffable sweetness, and the varied charms of every object around; the calm and peaceful scene, the harmony of which was about to be so soon desecrated by an act of blood. All these circumstances contributed to have their weight with Stanly, who had for some time remained silent, and deaf to the light-hearted observations of his companions. At length he spoke, "would that I were any where but engaged in this infernal piece of business."

"What! Stanly hang fire!" exclaimed his second. "What! and allow that sneaking, that smooth-faced, lack-a-daisical rascal to escape and crow, after having challenged you."

"Perish the thought," said another.

"You know me too well, Grantly, to suppose," rejoined Stanly, "that I would for a moment think of retracting in this stage of the proceeding; my only regret is to reflect on the folly on my part which gave rise to the position in which I find myself."

"Rash man, here we are," replied his companion, as the carriage, turning a corner of the road, discovered the appointed place of rendezvous, and in a moment afterward the approach of the antagonist party became visible; they had already alighted, and were walking across the field. In a few moments afterward, the gentlemen had saluted each other, and the seconds proceeded to measure the ground.

"Good morning, Templeton," said Stanly, frankly advancing and taking the proffered hand of his adversary, "are you ready?"

"Quite," was the laconic reply.

The belligerent parties then took up their position at a dozen paces, and after having each been presented with the pistols, remained a moment stationary, quietly and anxiously awaiting the signal to fire. The seconds having seen the coast clear from all intruders, retired a few paces, when Grantly, holding up his right hand, exclaimed in a voice loud enough to be heard by all present—"Fire!" Each ball, true to its trust, by a coincidence not very frequent in such cases, entered the body of the adversary. The seconds ran in. Stanly, who had received his antagonist's shot in the right leg, immediately fell to the ground, but Templeton remained standing, with his arm still extended as though about to fire a second time, and to the hurried and anxious inquiry of one of the seconds if he found himself hurt, he replied, "hurt, no—but I feel a kind of burning sensation in the right side." He mechanically placed his hand on the part affected, which he withdrew saturated with blood; he gazed for a moment with a bewildered air on those around him, and asked if Stanly was wounded. "Slightly," was the reply. "Thank God it's no worse," said he faintly; "his sister would have said that I had murdered hi—him!"—the unhappy young man would have fallen had he not been promptly caught in the arms of the surgeon, who, assisted by another, tore off the clothes, and proceeded to examine the direction the shot had taken; it was found that it had passed completely through the right side, almost grazing the spine. "This," the surgeon said, in reply to Stanly's eager question if he was dangerously hurt, "was sufficient to cause death, inasmuch as they scarcely dared to hope that the vital parts had escaped."

"Templeton," said Stanly, bending over him, "speak! for God's sake speak; say but one word of forgiveness, I entreat you!"

Templeton remained perfectly insensible to the observations addressed to him by his agonised companion, who continued with riveted gaze to watch over him as he lay apparently dying on the grass, with his head supported by the knee of the surgeon.

"Oh, this accursed affair," he passionately exclaimed at last, rising, "would to heaven I had sprang into the river, sooner than have perpetrated this fiendish act.

Oh, my poor dear sister, I little thought she cherished so warm a regard for him!"

"There, we've had enough of this, I think," said Grantly; "come, we must away."

"I will not go with you," said Stanly; "I dare not leave him."

"Pooh! leave him to his friends; come—" and they dragged him away by main force to the carriage, which in a moment afterward was seen whirling away from the spot.

A month after this event a scene of deep interest, but of an infinitely more pleasing character, was being enacted in — square. There lay Templeton, slowly but steadily recovering from the effects of his wound, contrary to the expectations of nearly all his friends; his recovery from death to life and love, being mainly attributable to the tender and affectionate assiduities of a certain young and lovely being who sacrificed nights and days to his rapidly-improving health.

"And do you really love me, Lawrence?" said the affectionate girl.

"Love you!" said Templeton—"yes—ininitely dearer than the poor life thou hast saved, blessed angel," he exclaimed with intense emotion. His whole soul was overpowered by the warm gush of his feelings, fresh from the fountain of love; how gratefully his eyes beamed upon her in the fulness of his affection. She wept upon his breast, and so they mingled their tears. Three months after, they were wedded.

# THAT VILE BOOK;

OR,

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"THIS is a very neat little book, Mrs. Emory," said her visitor, Mrs. Long, lifting, as she spoke, a small but very handsomely bound volume from the centre-table, and reading the title aloud.

"It is not only beautiful without, but, like a casket, contains precious jewels within," Mrs. Emory said, in reply.

"I never saw the book before. Who is the author?" turning as she spoke to the title-page.

"I do not know the writer. But to me that is of little consequence. I love the truth wherever I find it, and always try to separate it from him who utters it."

"The Heart's Ease.' What a quaint title!"

"But very expressive. Whoever reads that book aright, and lives up to its precepts, will find his heart, if a weary and heavy laden one, lightened of its burden."

"A precious treasure it must be, Mrs. Emory."

"So I esteem it."

"Are you reading it now?"

"I look into it almost every day. But why do you ask?"

"Because, if its pages contain such rich treasures, I should like to know something about them."

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to loan you the book, Mrs. Long."

"You are very kind. I shall esteem it a very great favour."

"Oh! no. Under all circumstances we are bound to communicate to others the truths that have power to elevate us; that is, if they are willing to receive them."

In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes Mrs. Long, having completed her call, for she was only making a brief formal visit to a lady with whom she had no very intimate acquaintance, but to visit whom had become a matter of politeness, arose, and after a pressing invitation to Mrs. Emory to come and see her often, departed with the volume in her hand.

Now Mrs. Long was a narrow-minded, sectarian bigot. It matters not by what name the spiritual body with which she was in association was called. There are such as she in all denominations. Everything that did not meet the square and rule of her confession of faith, was rejected with a pious indignation that burned with a zeal by no means springing from the activity of a truly heavenly principle. She was one of that class whose hatred

of what they call error and heresy is so great that they would not hesitate a moment to root out the tares to the imminent danger of the wheat, although the divine injunction is to let the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, when they will be separated.

Well, so soon as Mrs. Long had put off her bonnet and shawl, she sat down to read her borrowed book.

"I shall find out by this what she is," was her thought as she did so, almost audibly expressed.

The reader will understand by this that she was not yet sufficiently acquainted with Mrs. Emory to know whether she were Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, or what she was. And upon this point she was always very curious, for she had a different estimation of friendship according as the religious faith of the subject approximated or receded from her own. It will also be seen that, in borrowing the book, which, she at once inferred from Mrs. Emory's peculiar expressions in regard to it, contained some exhibition of her religious views, she expected to get a clue to all she wished to know.

So down she sat, and commenced reading with fixed attention.

"Bless me!" she exclaimed, after about five minutes, pausing, and lifting her hands and eyes in astonishment. "And this is that precious truth she was in such raptures about! Truth!" Mrs. Long's manner became indignant. "Truth! A vile and miserable heresy! To call that truth!"

And Mrs. Long struck her finger with emphatic earnestness upon the page she had been reading.

"Aint it too bad!"

After this first little burst of indignation had passed off, Mrs. Long bent down again over the book, and commenced reading with an attention keenly alive.

"Horrible doctrine!" she ejaculated, in a few minutes, again pausing. "And can it be possible that Mrs. Emory believes such dreadful things! I really thought better of her. How can any one fall into such insane delusions? But let me look further."

And again Mrs. Long resumed her reading.

"Goodness gracious! Was there ever such rank and fatal heresy!" ejaculated the amazed sectarian, once more pausing and throwing herself back in her chair. "Why this book is enough to corrupt a whole community. I wonder that such a publi-

cation is tolerated in a Christian land! The flood-gates of infidelity might just as well be opened at once!"

Having thus opened the safety-valve of her indignation, and let some of the struggling wrath within escape, Mrs. Long resumed her reading, which was continued for an hour longer, accompanied with rapidly recurring exclamations of—

"Goodness gracious!"

"Dreadful!"

"Infamous heresy!"

"Can it be possible that Mrs. Emory believes these things!"

"Call this precious truth, indeed!"

"Horrible!"

"Call that Christian doctrine!"

"Blasphemy!"

And so on, exhausting the vocabulary of indignant astonishment, in her professed horror of the false doctrines, as she deemed them, which the little volume presented. At last this indignation rose so high that she threw the book from her with a holy horror, or, at least, with what she imagined to be a holy horror of its insane and corrupting delusions.

"Aint it too bad!" she ejaculated, breathing heavily; "aint it dreadful to think that any one—especially one assuming to be a lady and a Christian, as does Mrs. Emory—should not only imbibe such horrible doctrines, but present them to others in the hope of corrupting them likewise. I can never feel a particle of respect for her after this. It was a downright insult to her visitors for her to permit such a book, with such a lying title, to be seen upon her centre-table; and worse, for her to recommend it to their perusal as containing high and important truths. But I'll put a stop to any harm that it may do hereafter. I'll let the antidote go with the bane!" she said in a changed and exulting tone, as some suddenly formed resolution found a distinct place in her mind.

She then took up the book which she had tossed so indignantly from her, and, going to her secretary, seated herself with the volume in her hand. Opening to the title-page, she lifted a pen and drew a line across the leading title of the book. Then she wrote in bold letters, just above it,

"A false title."

Turning, then, over to the opening chapter, she read down about half a page, when she paused, underscored a sentence, and wrote in the margin,

"A fatal heresy."

On the next leaf, she blotted out several lines, with this memorandum:

"Too horrible for a pious Christian to read."

A little farther down appeared,

"Shameful perversion of the truth!"

Then she read on a few pages, in which so much of false doctrine appeared, that she despaired of any effectual antidote that her pen could apply. To remedy this evil effectually, she tore half of several pages off from top to bottom, and wrote upon the mutilated parts that remained,

"Insane perversions! Let them be blotted out!"

In this way she went nearly through the beautifully printed and highly cherished volume, which happened to be the gift of a dearly beloved sister in England, making her memorandums on nearly every page, while others were entirely destroyed. The book was, of course, rendered utterly valueless.

It was sometime during the afternoon of the same day that a small package, accompanied by a note, was left at the door of Mrs. Emory. On opening the note, she found it to read thus.

"MADAM:—I return you that vile book which I received of you this morning. The reading of it has shocked me greatly. Its doctrines and precepts are heretical and dangerous. You must pardon the mutilations which I have made, and the remarks and corrections which I have taken the liberty to append. I could not conscientiously do otherwise. I should have considered myself guilty of a wrong to yourself, and a wrong to any one into whose hands that vile book might have fallen, had I not administered an antidote with the poison. And now, Madam, let me earnestly entreat you to put far from you such horrible doctrines as that book teaches. They will as certainly sink your soul into endless perdition as you are living.

"Yours, &c.

"HARRIET LONG."

Such an epistle, of course, took Mrs. Emory altogether by surprise, and shocked her feelings very greatly. But when she opened the package, and saw the condition of her highly prized volume—prized for the pure and elevating truths, apparent to her rational mind, that it contained, and prized on account of the beloved sister from whom it was a gift of affection—she could not help giving way to tears, at the same time that she felt an honest indignation against the woman who had so far forgotten the true spirit of the Christian character as to injure and insult her. It was some time before her suddenly disturbed thoughts became tranquil, and she could feel any degree of kindness towards one who had, although a stranger until within a few weeks, taken a liberty with her and her property that would have been unwarrantable in a most intimate friend. When her husband came in that evening Mrs. Emory handed him Mrs. Long's note, and the book with which she had taken such an unauthorized liberty. After he had read the one, and examined the other through and through, with many exclamations of surprise, he could not help smiling, though he felt indignant, as he said,

"This certainly is a piece of assurance far in advance of anything that has ever come under my notice. And done, too, in the name of religion, and under the plea of a conscientious regard to duty."

"She certainly cannot be in her right mind. This act is not that of a truly sane person."

"She is about as sane as a large class of bigoted religionists, few of whom, however, in this day, have ever the boldness to act out their true sentiments as fully as Mrs. Long has done. It is this very principle of intolerance; this very kind of conscientious regard to the truth, and horror of that which is false, that carried martyrs to the stake. Don't you suppose, that, were Mrs. Long fully possessed of the power, she would not consider it as religiously her duty to imprison you, or put you to death to prevent your utterance and promulgation of what she thought to be heretical doctrines, as she did to destroy your book to-day? Certainly she would. She went as far as she dared in the present instance, and in doing so, she had no perception of the fact, that, while she was acting from piety alone, she was sacrificing charity, or the rights of others, that fundamental principle of religion."

"That is very true. It was *my* book that she injured; *my* property that she destroyed. And in that she acted dishonestly."

Some few weeks subsequent to this occurrence, Mrs. Long was relating what she had done, to a group of ladies at a social party.

"You did perfectly right," said one. "For my part I would set fire to the publication office of such vile books were I not afraid of being found out and punished."

"So would I," responded another, falling at once into the general feeling that prevailed in the group.

"It is our duty," said a third; "a solemn duty, to suppress everything of this kind, because its promulgation is calculated to do a most fatal injury to society. If a serpent crosses my path, I am bound to kill that serpent, lest it bite my neighbour. And so with books whose tendency is evil, we are bound to destroy them, or render them harmless, as Mrs. Long has done in the present instance, lest our neighbours be eternally injured. This, to me, is perfectly clear."

"But every one has a legal right to publish and promulgate his religious sentiments in this country, provided they do not injure others in their persons or property," remarked a listener, who had, heretofore, been silent.

"But a legal right don't always make a moral right, remember."

"But general principles of law, which give equal protection to all, are high moral principles."

"And yet it is the very height of immorality to print and publish books that have a tendency to injure the public."

"Very true, but who is to judge of this tendency?"

"Why such a tendency is always as plain as daylight to one who will look at it."

"And such tendency you saw in the book which Mrs. Emory loaned you?"

"Most assuredly I did."

"In what did it consist?"

"Why it consisted in the declarations of most

palpable denials of fundamental religious truths. Truths taught upon every page of the Bible."

"Leading to the practice of immorality, I presume?"

"Certainly. Don't all false doctrines lead to immorality?"

"Does Mrs. Emory believe in the doctrines inculcated in the book you allude to?"

"Of course she does. She spoke of it as being full of the most instructive and elevating truths."

"Then the inference is plain, that Mrs. Emory cannot lead a purely moral life?"

"You can draw what inference you please," Mrs. Long replied. "As far as I am concerned, I do not see how any one can fully believe such doctrines, and have a moral principle that is uncontaminated. That which any one believes, must, necessarily, modify his character."

"There is the very lady of whom we were speaking," one of the little group said, as Mrs. Emory entered the room at the moment. "I wonder if she will speak to you?"

"I presume not. No doubt I have mortally offended her."

"Suppose any one had borrowed a favourite book of you, and had treated it as you treated the volume which you got from Mrs. Emory, would you, or would you not, be offended?" asked the individual who had shown a disposition not to approve of either her sentiments or her actions.

"No one would have a right to treat my books so, for they contain no false doctrines. But if I loaned any one a volume containing vile and wicked heresies, calculated to ruin the soul, then I ought to have my book served exactly as I served hers."

"If Mrs. Emory were asked about the matter, she would no doubt say that her book did not contain vile and wicked heresies."

"But it did, though."

"In your opinion."

"In my opinion, and in the opinion of every true Christian," was Mrs. Long's emphatic reply.

The conversation was here interrupted by the appearance of Mrs. Emory herself, who was introduced to the group and mingled in it without immediately perceiving that Mrs. Long made a part of it.

The latter at once drew herself up with a dignified air.

"We were just alluding to you, Mrs. Emory," said the individual whose conversation had indicated a preference of feeling towards her.

"Ah! Well, I am here now to answer for myself, if required. Is it anything in which I have a particular interest?"

"I suppose that it is. Mrs. Long has just been telling us of the manner in which she treated a volume loaned her by you."

Mrs. Emory's countenance grew at once serious, and Mrs. Long was evidently by no means easy in mind.

"Good evening, Mrs. Emory," the latter said, with an embarrassed air.

"Good evening, ma'am," was the mild, but not cordial response of Mrs. Emory.

"I have heard some two or three express an opinion of the matter," resumed the lady who had alluded to the unpleasant subject; "and now, Mrs. Emory, I should very much like to learn your views."

"Of course, as I am a party interested in the matter, I cannot be supposed to be able to give an unbiassed opinion. And besides, I do seriously think that it is a subject which ought not to be introduced here. Therefore, you will be kind enough to excuse me."

"The subject has already been introduced and canvassed in your absence. As you are a party particularly interested, and have made your appearance here before the discussion has ended, it is but fair that you should be allowed the privilege of expressing an opinion."

"I do not think," replied Mrs. Emory mildly, "that I am very much interested in the matter. I am, and have been, altogether passive in regard to it; and still wish to remain so."

"But you are charged," went on the persevering friend, "with loaning a book to a lady that contained vile and wicked heresies, calculated to corrupt the morals of the community."

"That is altogether a mistake, madam."

"Indeed, then, and it is not," spoke up Mrs. Long, with warmth.

To this Mrs. Emory made no reply; and Mrs. Long resumed.

"It taught the doctrine that——"

"Pardon me, if you please," Mrs. Emory said, in a mild yet firm tone, interrupting the statement about to be made. "I object, positively, to the introduction of doctrinal subjects, in a spirit of controversy, in social parties of individuals from all denominations. No good can positively arise from it, and much harm may be the consequence. Let us, as we all meet upon this common plane of mutual good feeling, estimate each other by the known good of life, and not by a comparison of doctrinal tenets."

"That is all very specious and plausible," Mrs. Long rejoined, with increasing warmth, "but who does not know that a religious belief influences the life?"

"Your remark is true to a very great extent," Mrs. Emory said, in the same calm tone of voice with which she had commenced speaking. "But it is also true, that we often see two persons professing the same doctrines, whose lives are very different. One being just, and the other unjust."

"In that case, the latter, in my opinion, did not really believe what he professed."

"That is no doubt a true remark. But in my case, I do most solemnly believe the doctrines I profess, and daily endeavour to make my life conform to their precepts. If they are vile and wicked my life must be vile and wicked also. Is not that a fair conclusion?"

To this Mrs. Long only remarked, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

"Justly said; and now, let us apply that rule to the matter under discussion: or that was under discussion when I came in, and let it determine which of us has the truer doctrines. Mine teach me to regard my neighbour even better than myself, and from this affection to endeavour to do him all the good I possibly can. They also teach me to act justly and honestly to all."

"And pray, madam, doesn't my religion teach me to act justly and honestly towards all?"

"You did not, at least, I am bound to say, act honestly and justly towards me," Mrs. Emory replied mildly, but firmly.

"I deny the charge," was the low, indignant answer.

"Then I stand compelled to prove it. You came to my house, and asked me to loan you a very highly cherished volume—highly cherished as the gift of a beloved, and far distant sister, and still more so for the precious truths to me that it contains. This volume, *my property*, you so mutilated as to make it utterly worthless. Was that just, was that honest? I leave those around to decide. You had no more right to destroy that book than you had to take from my table a silver spoon."

"I had a right, and I can prove it."

"Then vindicate your conduct, Mrs. Long."

"The tendency of the book was demoralizing, and calculated to harm mankind. I destroyed it as I would a venomous serpent."

"As to its demoralizing tendencies, I believe you are altogether in error, for its reigning precept is an obligation to love the neighbour, and the Lord supremely. But admitting your allegation to be true, you would, acting from the principle you advanced, feel it as much your duty to set fire to our place of worship, as to burn one of our books, would you not?"

"Certainly I would!" Mrs. Long angrily replied, "if I dared. I should esteem the act as doing God service."

"By their fruits ye shall know them!" was all the answer that Mrs. Emory made, as she arose and left the little circle into which she had been drawn, and sought in another part of the room more agreeable companionship.

Original.

# THE ALLONBYS.

BY MRS. EMMA C. EMBURY.

I USED to think I possessed some little skill in deciphering character;—I really flattered myself that I had acquired some insight into human nature, and that I could give a shrewd guess as to the prominent traits of individuality, without being very far wrong. But I received a lesson in humility, and learned to distrust my own judgment most sadly, after I became acquainted with the Allonbys. They so confounded all my theories, so disappointed all my expectations, that I have ever since given up all claim to the use of *introspective* spectacles.

The Allonbys occupied a noble mansion in the village of Lindendale, where they lived in the midst of all the appliances of wealth. Their garden and grounds, their conservatories and aviary, were the pride of the place; they kept a carriage, employed a host of servants, and, in short, seemed perfectly to understand the luxury of riches. Mr. George Fitzarthur Allonby was one of the most remarkable men it has ever been my fortune to meet. Of a stature which would have entitled him to nothing less than the rank of colonel in the King of Prussia's gigantic regiment, yet so perfectly symmetrical in his form, that all other men looked dwarfed in his presence,—with a bearing, too, which we usually designate by the epithet "princely," not because it actually appertains to the rulers of nations, but because it seems the impersonation of mental and physical power,—he was no less distinguished for the extreme beauty of his classical features, and the admirable coloring with which nature had adorned a countenance that might well be deemed his masterpiece. The jetty locks, curling like tendrils of the vine, in close and delicate rings to the well formed head, the dark, bright, deep-set eyes gleaming beneath the well defined arch of the brow, the lips, crimson and velvet-like as the pomegranate blossom, teeth of glittering whiteness, and a complexion of the rich bronze tint so rarely seen in northern climes, formed that rare combination of harmony and contrast which is often the hopeless study of an artist's life. His talents were of a very high order, and he was as distinguished for the variety as for the brilliancy of his attainments. As a conversationist, he was unrivalled, for his fine scholarship, his profound knowledge of human nature, and the curious details of personal adventure with which his discourse was diversified, rendered him the delight of society. He sung with exquisite taste, sketched beautifully, was an admirable caricaturist, and, in short, seemed to have obtained a monopoly of talent sufficient to have made the fortune of twenty ordinary men.

Mrs. Allonby was her husband's antipodes. She was below middle size, slightly deformed in person, pale, sallow, and only redeemed from the *feminine sin* of positive ugliness, by a small, well-formed mouth, and dark, lustrous eyes. Her eyes were indeed a most singular feature, very large, and usually veiled beneath the full

and veined lid, which, while it curtained their brilliancy, displayed their exquisite shape, and the peculiar beauty of the over-arching brow, there was yet, at times, a wild, almost fierce glare, that seemed to shoot, like a bale-fire, from their shadowy depths. Her mouth was like that of a beautiful child; there was a placid folding of the lips, such as one seldom sees except in a sleeping infant, and her smile, which was as rare as it was beautiful, had the peculiar sweetness that belongs only to the days of innocent happiness. Usually grave and quiet, she was not often excited by pleasurable emotions, but when, as it sometimes happened, those heavy lids were raised, and that sweet mouth expanded into a smile, it was as if a sudden light had broke forth in the midst of darkness. I have watched her for hours, in order to see the fine effect of that *sun-burst* upon her dark and sombre countenance. George Allonby, their only child, was almost as remarkable as his parents, but his distinguishing traits were of a very different order. A more disagreeable, coarse, unlicked cub, never reached the verge of manhood, and it seemed difficult to believe that the delicate-looking Mrs. Allonby, whose personal defects did not detract from the youthfulness of her appearance, could be the mother of the swarthy, hard-featured young man who certainly looked as old as herself. What made the affair still more difficult of comprehension, was, the ill-disguised aversion with which the mother seemed to regard her son. However honied might be her tone to others, her voice was ever pitched in an angry key when she addressed him, and not all the cautious dropping of her eyelids could conceal the fierce glare with which she regarded him.

Mr. Allonby was evidently much older than his wife, but he was one of those persons whose noble presence seems to disarm even time. It was utterly impossible to determine his actual age, for though his figure was that of matured manhood, his unfurrowed brow, his brilliant teeth, his glossy black hair, and his elastic step, seemed to belong to one just in the prime of life. There was only one thing which gave any clue to conjecture, and this was, the many and varied scenes in which Mr. Allonby described himself as an actor. Yet this was a most fallacious guide, since, to the quiet denizen of home, a patriarchal span of life would seem too short for the accomplishment of so many adventures. Accordingly, to his own account, Mr. Allonby had seen every variety of existence. He had dined on the top of the pyramid of Cheops, eaten bird's-nest soup with the Chinoso, held dog-feasts with the Rocky Mountain Indians, feasted on roasted ice with a Russian Czarowitz, supped on frog-ragout with a French princess, and drank Regent's punch with that prince of routs, George the Fourth. Every traversible spot on the face of the globe, had been subjected to his researches. He had ascended Mount Blanc, and dived into the bowels of a Polish salt mine, clambered over the Caucasian Mountains, and explored the barren steppes of Tartary, been half frozen amid the snows of Siberia, half baked in the sands of Sahara, and half drowned in the rapids of Niagara. There was no conceivable hardship which

he had not undergone, and no inconceivable adventure which he would not undertake to describe. Those who have ever listened to the lectures of a certain Oriental traveller, whose record of *personal* adventures was sufficiently extensive to allow of the incorporation into it of every incident which had ever befallen all other travellers in eastern countries, will be able fully to comprehend the wonder-moving talents of Mr. Allonby. But, unlike his great successor in the Munchausen profession, Allonby was no vulgar egotist, who thrust his marvellous stories upon people, even when they were already surfeited with them. His inimitable tact enabled him to do what few conversationists can compass; he could make his hearers content with being outshone, and those even, who could better forgive a positive injury, than a temporary eclipse, were found eager to draw forth the exhaustless stores of the inimitable narrator. He was the most adroit flatterer, too, in the world; not that he uttered fulsome compliments—he was too skilful to employ such vulgar weapons—the dart with which he struck home to the hearts of all was so delicately feathered, and so keenly pointed, that it could not fail to reach its aim. His secret in the art of pleasing, was *deference*. He was so patient a listener, so submissive to advice, so prompt to adopt the counsel of his friends, so quick to comprehend the meaning of those who were not quite sure they could comprehend themselves, and so ready to lend the plumage of his own winged words to the feeble and unbedged wittings of others, that he was a general favorite, notwithstanding the surpassing brilliancy that threw all others into the shade, or only allowed them to shine in reflected light.

No party in Lindendale was considered complete without Mr. Allonby, but the pleasure derived from his society, was, in most cases, marred, or, at least, impaired by the presence of the other members of his family. George Allonby was a coarse, vulgar fellow, vain of his father's wealth, ignorant of every thing except shooting and fishing, destitute of refinement or good breeding, and generally believed to be as deficient in morals as in manners. Yet there was a blunt honesty about him, a sort of dare-devil air, which was less distasteful to most persons, than the bland sweetness of his mother. Mrs. Allonby was certainly a most eccentric and moody creature. Sometimes she would sit for hours silent, abstracted and melancholy, in the midst of a gay circle, perfectly regardless of all attempts to arouse her from her reverie. Sometimes she would appear in elated spirits, and then, woe to the man or woman who fell under the lash of her stinging satire. Sometimes she was all gentleness, with a smile of such melting softness on her rosy lip, that her dark face seemed almost angelic in its sweet expression. But whenever she wore such a look—whenever that seraphic smile was accompanied by a languid drooping of her fringed lids, giving her the semblance of Madonna-like gentleness, then every word was sure to be imbued with a double portion of bitterness. At such times, it was utterly impossible to distinguish between a compliment and a sarcasm, a smile and a sneer. She would

utter the most elegantly-turned phrases, in a voice soft as the summer breeze, but the words would bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder; while the very persons who were most wounded by them, were disposed to blame their own sensitiveness rather than her malignity. Every body learned to dread and distrust her, yet no one whispered such a feeling to his neighbor, for the darts which she flung were so minute, that complaint of so tiny a wound, seemed rather to make one an object of contempt than pity. Her venom was indeed like that of the bee, which derives the poison of its sting from its own honey, or, like the creese of the treacherous Malay, which inflicts its deadliest wound when it has been dipped in the fragrant juice of the delicious pine-apple.

No person in Lindendale was acquainted with the former history of the family. Mr. Allonby claimed to be a native of the British West Indies, while his wife did not hesitate to assert superiority over the villagers, on the ground of her English birth. They were wealthy, but how or where their riches were obtained, none knew, and certainly few cared. They were looked upon as rather eccentric strangers, whose peculiarities were attributable to their former habits of life, and as long as they paid their debts, they were certainly to be regarded with the respect due to integrity. But in a country village where there is usually a great dearth of topics of general interest, the affairs of individuals are apt to excite special attention; and no where is the love of gossip so generally diffused as within the precincts of a small country town. It was not likely, therefore, that the internal economy of a house like that occupied by the Allonbys, would escape the keen supervision of the newsmongers, and though curiosity was for a long time baffled by the difficulty of obtaining information from their foreign servants, yet some things transpired which furnished food for conversation. Among Mr. Allonby's domestics, was a gigantic negro, who was said to be deaf and dumb, though it was shrewdly suspected that the loss of speech was not the result of a deficiency in the sense of hearing. Indeed, he was looked upon as a spy in the family, and it was currently believed that the cruelty which had deprived him of his tongue, had also left its trace in the increased malevolence of his heart. He was a ferocious and disgusting creature, and the wonder was, that Mr. Allonby should retain him in his service, especially when it was known that he was an object of perfect abhorrence to Mrs. Allonby. There was something beyond ordinary dislike in her look and manner when the black approached her—something resembling the terror and loathing with which one is accustomed to regard a fierce and treacherous wild beast. Yet, Mr. Allonby treated him with the utmost confidence, and frequently conversed with him by means of signs, inexplicable to every one else, while it was asserted that he was often admitted to his master's dressing-room, where, alone, he was permitted to give evidence that he still retained his sense of hearing. Another peculiarity in their domestic management, and one, perhaps, which could not fail to attract the notice of American housewives, was the fact

that Mrs. Allonby never attempted to direct her servants. A mulatto girl was her constant attendant within doors, but the affairs of the household were never allowed to occupy her attention for a moment. This was, of course, attributed to her foreign education, and many a notable dame pitied the excellent Mr. Allonby for having so thriftless and ignorant a wife.

It was discovered, moreover, that Mrs. Allonby was subjected in a singular manner to her husband's influence. He was a very pattern of conjugal tenderness—a very model of politeness and attentive kindness. His hand always wrapped the warm cloak around her shrinking form, and his stalwart arms bore her slight figure into the carriage; he hovered near her in society, watched her with unceasing solicitude, listened as if entranced to her sallies of caustic wit, mingled his deep voice with her sweet tones when she sung, turned the leaves of her music when she played, and, but that he managed to find sufficient time to play the courteous knight with every pretty woman in society, would have been ridiculed for his foolish fondness to his wife. Yet all his devotion was but an incense flung upon the winds. Mrs. Allonby never seemed so cold and so unamiable as when he was lavishing all his kindness upon her. There was no responsive look of tenderness, no answering smile of confidence, no evidence of reciprocal affection to repay this expenditure of love. She submitted passively to his attentions, silently obeyed his wishes, and, however wayward to others, was perfectly submissive to his will; but seldom has any one ever yielded such chilling duty to the rule of affection. A mystic language, known only to themselves, enabled him to express his will, and allowed her to comprehend it, for, it frequently happened, that when her husband would approach her, during one of her reckless and bitter moods, a single look, or even a slight gesture, would be sufficient to check and still her. Her treatment of her son was infinitely more reprehensible, for, instead of weaning him from his evil habits and coarse tastes, by the gentle influence of maternal tenderness, she seemed to take pleasure in making his home a scene of discord and disquiet, while she abetted him in every wild frolic, and encouraged him in every base pursuit.

The thousand petty circumstances from which all these inferences were drawn, were not discovered in a day. Indeed, several years elapsed, during which time Mr. Allonby had become an object of redoubled interest to those who sympathized in what they believed to be his domestic trials, while the general opinion was decidedly adverse to any claim which Mrs. Allonby might put forward to regard and esteem. She was universally looked upon as an ill-tempered, cold-hearted, malicious woman, who was insensible to every claim of maternal affection, and many, especially among the young ladies, felt the most earnest compassion for the handsome husband. Yet a few ventured to assert that there was some mystery in the story of the ill-assorted pair, and some hinted that much of Mrs. Allonby's bitterness of speech was but the utterance of a gounded and indignant spirit—"the stings of a heart the

world had stung." Her husband was evidently master over her will, and her unresisting submission certainly bore a greater resemblance to slavish fear than to the self-denying devotion of woman's love. They offered a curious problem to the student of human nature, which could scarcely be solved without the aid of the parties most concerned.

They had resided in Lindendale between five and six years, when a terrible catastrophe changed the course of events. Mr. Allonby was proud of his skill in horsemanship, and usually selected the most fiery and ungovernable steed as his favorite for the saddle. One very beautiful horse, to whom, on account of his untameable spirit, the appropriate name of 'Lucifer' had been given, frequently tried, to the utmost, Mr. Allonby's strength. Indeed, it was in the treatment of this noble animal that he discovered some traits of character which evinced less amiability than the world had given him credit for. It was said that he wreaked upon his horse the angry feelings which his wife's conduct awakened, and if this were true, the retribution was certainly most appropriate. Late one afternoon he was returning from a ride, while the bloody foam which hung from bit and rein, attested the violence of the discipline which Lucifer had received. The horse was fretted and goaded almost to madness, and the brow of his rider still wore the scowl of fierce anger, as he urged the animal to his utmost speed, in order to avoid the gathering thunderstorm which was rapidly approaching. But Lucifer's fleetness could not outstrip the wings of the wind, and just as they approached a high bank which overhung the river, the storm burst upon them. A blinding flash of lightning struck the eyes of the already terrified animal; he started, reared, and the next instant both horse and rider were lying on the bed of jagged rocks bordering the river.

Crushed and bleeding, Mr. Allonby was borne to his home, but they who carried the senseless body, long remembered the expression of Mrs. Allonby's face when the fearful sight met her view. They had perhaps expected shrieks and cries, or, at least, the deep swoon of over-excited feeling, but the wild, almost maniacal look of horror which dilated her immense eyes, and the smile of almost savage triumph which immediately afterwards wreathed her lovely mouth, were as frightful as they were inexplicable. Mr. Allonby lingered twenty-four hours, but the feeble pulsations of his heart were the only evidence that he still lived, for neither by sound or movement did he evince the slightest consciousness after his fall. His wife watched at his bed-side, wiped the death-damps from his brow, and removed the foam of agony which gathered thick and fast upon his lips, yet not a tear nor sigh escaped her during the performance of her task. Calm and self-possessed, she exhibited a degree of energy very unlike her wonted inertness and indifference. While even George, rude and careless as he generally seemed, was horror-stricken by this unlooked-for calamity, Mrs. Allonby was as unmoved as if no human sympathy dwelt in her sacred bosom. Nor was her conduct less consummate on the day of the funeral. Mr. Allonby had been so general a

favorite, that a great concourse of people had assembled to pay the last duties to the lifeless body, and, according to a pleasing custom, which prevails in many parts of the country, most of the females who attended, had adopted some slight badge of mourning as a tribute of respect. What was the surprize of all, therefore, when they beheld Mrs. Allonby seated at the head of the coffin, clad in raiment of *spotless white*, and wearing as placid a look as if she had been bidden to a bridal.

Of course, the whole village cried shame on the woman who could act such a part under so terrible a bereavement. Juba, the black slave, together with the mulatto girl, who had acted as Mrs. Allonby's maid, absconded on the very evening of their master's funeral, thus affording another proof that Mr. Allonby had been their sole protector against his wife's vindictive dislike. No attempt was made to discover their retreat, and the widow seemed determined to dispose of her son's claims upon them with no less promptitude. In less than a week afterwards, the lawyer of Lindendale was summoned to draw up certain papers, by which George Allonby was put in possession of the whole domain then in occupation of the family, together with a certain sum of money; upon condition that at no future time he should ever lay claim to any portion of Mrs. Allonby's fortune. The day subsequent to the execution of these papers, the widow left Lindendale, and George only remained long enough to sell the property with which he had been endowed. He went abroad soon after, and nothing further was ever known of his history.

Some eight or ten years had elapsed, and the various vicissitudes in my own affairs had nearly effaced all trace of this singular family from my remembrance, when I accidentally met Mrs. Allonby in the midst of a gay circle at a fashionable watering place. There was no mistaking those wonderful eyes and that exquisite mouth, yet the transformation in her whole appearance was as wonderful as a tale of fairy land. Time seemed to have improved rather than impaired her person: her face had lost little of its youthfulness, and either from a more tasteful style of dress, or perhaps from the influences of a cheerful spirit, it certainly looked almost beautiful. The slight deformity of her figure was concealed by a judiciously arranged costume, and as I beheld her, glittering with jewels, the centre of a brilliant throng, who were enjoying her sallies of wit, and drinking in with delight the melody of her sweet voice, I could scarcely believe the evidence of my own senses. To my great surprize, she addressed me with all the cordiality of an old acquaintance; and, notwithstanding my prejudices against her, I could not but be charmed with the elegance of her manners and the warmth of her kindness. The more I reflected upon the past, the more I was puzzled to understand the present, for no two beings could seem so utterly unlike as the Mrs. Allonby of Lindendale, and the woman of fashion, who now appeared before me. Yet the intercourse of a few days was sufficient to discover some points of resemblance. Beneath all the disguise of courtly demeanor was still visible at times, the mocking spirit of fierce sarcasm,

while her recklessness and waywardness was only softened—not subdued, by the influence of society. She held some opinions, too, which savored so much of eccentricity, that they might almost have been considered the effusions of a disordered brain, and, upon the whole, I was obliged to believe her a most fascinating, but dangerous woman. I really believe she read my thoughts: for, one evening she came to my room, and with that peculiar smile, that had always seemed to me so beautiful, she begged my attention to the tale of her early life, which, with little preparatory apology, she thus related:—

“When I left Lindendale, it was with a feeling of stern contempt for society, which rendered me perfectly regardless of its censure, and I therefore cared little for the opinions that my neighbors might have formed of my conduct. But a sense of freedom has awakened me to better impulses. I now know, that though man may brave public opinion with impunity, yet woman must submit to its dictation, and I would therefore explain to you some of the causes which led to my exasperation of feeling.

“Mr. Allonby was twenty years my senior; but you, who knew him, and could estimate the brilliancy of his character, may easily imagine how attractive he appeared to a young and romantic girl. I was just from boarding-school, when I first met him, and in less than six weeks afterwards I eloped with him. We were married; but my father never forgave me. He died in less than a year, and by his will left me an annuity of one thousand pounds, during the life of my husband; in case I survived Mr. Allonby, the whole income, which was very large, was to be enjoyed by me, but the bulk of the estate was bequeathed to my children; or, failing these, to various charitable institutions named in the will. Mr. Allonby's disappointment, when the terms of my father's will were made known to him, first led me to doubt the wisdom of my choice. He made several attempts to destroy the legality of the testament, but after sacrificing large sums of money was compelled to desist; and finally determined to return to Havanna, where he had resided for some years previous to his marriage. I, of course, accompanied him, and it was there that I was first made acquainted with his early history.

“He was, in truth, the natural son of a planter, in the island of Jamaica, and had been educated in the best institutions of learning which England could boast. His father had been excessively fond of him, as his first and only child, and had determined, notwithstanding the stain on the boy's birth, (for his mother was one of a proscribed and degraded race,) that he should become his heir. But these feelings of justice and affection were soon blunted. Other children, claiming the same parentage, gathered around the old man, and though the eldest son still remained in the enjoyment of wealth and rank in England, yet his brothers and sisters were but as serfs to the selfish and voluptuous father. In the progress of time the planter determined to marry. This new alliance necessarily induced the severance of more degrading ties, and the wife, jealous of the rights of her own children, insisted on the recall of the young man

from abroad. The father, who was now almost imbecile in mind, obeyed the suggestion, and my husband, then a youth of two-and-twenty, returned to his native island, only to find himself a slave, and the son of a slave. His education had unfitted him for so degrading a position, and the malignant passions which nature had implanted in his bosom, taught him to revenge his father's injustice. The nature of his vengeance was only darkly hinted to me; that it was most terrible, I can easily believe, for I knew the character of the avenger. Respecting his after career he was not disposed to be communicative, but his adventures were as various as were his talents. He has been driven about the world by many a freak of fortune, but he has ever given buffet for buffet, blow for blow—ay, and crime for crime.

"It was a long time, after I had become a resident of Havana, before I suspected that my husband's ostensible business was not his real occupation, and a still longer time elapsed, ere I discovered the disgraceful secret of his wealth. Would you have believed, that even while the brand of slavery was burning on his brow, he yet could inflict on others the injury he had so deeply avenged? Can you associate that noble form, that princely bearing, that sublime countenance with the idea of a base slave-dealer,—a trafficker in human flesh! Yet, such was George Allonby! Cargo after cargo of these miserable captives were bought and sold under his directions, and when, (as it happened more than once) he took command of one of his own vessels, leaving me under the watchful guard of the ferocious Juba, I had too much reason to believe that he, who spared not the black race, had little mercy on his white brethren.—Heaven forgive me, if I wrong him; but the rich galleon which sailed in advance of his swift bark, when he made his last voyage, never reached port, and yet the sea, which faithfully held the dead, given to its embrace, did not whelm the treasure which that ship had contained.

"But success does not always attend the guilty. Misfortunes fell thick and fast upon him, and his ill-gotten gains seemed to vanish like fairy gold from his grasp. Perhaps, too, he was weary of this reckless life, and longed once more for the refinements of society. Whatever might have been his motives, he determined to return to England, and make another attempt to obtain my fortune. I have as yet said nothing of his treatment of me, nor indeed can I find words adequate to give you an idea of my sufferings. I had endured every cruelty and every degradation at his hands. The toy of his idle hours, I was yet doomed to be the victim of his caprice, and indeed I was little else than a prisoner, while the wretch, Juba, was my warder. You can have no idea of the horrors of my situation. The treatment I endured, and my disgust at Mr. Allonby's abominable traffic, made me loathe his very sight. I longed to escape from him, and sometimes the thought of denouncing him to justice, as soon as we should reach my native land, came to my mind, like a temptation of the evil one.

"I know not whether, in the wandering fancies of sleep, I betrayed my thoughts, or whether Mr. Allonby had already determined upon this new plan of obtaining control of my fortune, but scarcely had I set foot in

England when I was entrapped into one of those private mad-houses which then existed in all their abuses. My mind was already weakened by sights and scenes of horror,—and now, the hoarse cries, the shrieks, the rattling chains, the sounding scourge, which, at that time, formed the music of a mad-house, produced its natural consequences. My reason sunk under the fearful influences of the place, and my actual insanity left me the helpless victim of a husband's tyranny. I cannot tell how long I remained in this state, but I at length recovered my senses, to find myself the inmate of a solitary cell, and chained like a galley slave to my dungeon. The first gleam of reason, however, brought my husband to my side. I remember well his first visit. He seemed like an angel of light, as the beauty of his noble countenance illumined my dreary abode, and he told me he had come to give me freedom. I had become weak and timid as a child,—I wept, I clasped his knees, I called him by every endearing epithet, and he bore me away to brighter scenes. But I soon found that his kindness had been assumed for selfish purposes. As the first condition of my release I was obliged to promise that I would receive and claim, as my own child, the boy whom you have seen in Lindendale. He was the son of my husband, born before I ever knew him, and, indeed, not many years my junior. I assented to every exaction, and was once more allowed to breathe the pure air of heaven.

"In order to give plausibility to the tale of the boy's maternity, it was necessary to dwell among those who knew nothing of our former history, and therefore it was that Mr. Allonby determined to visit America. After travelling in various parts of the country, we finally settled in Lindendale, and there, were passed the most peaceful hours of my troubled life. My husband now felt sure of the reversion of my fortune to his son, and he had secured my fealty and submission by actual bodily fear. I blush, to record the fact, that my own weakened mind and my husband's herculean bodily strength formed the bond of my passive obedience. I was like a child who has been terrified, until all mental power is crushed beneath the weight of craven fear. I was afraid to resist his will, and was even like a beaten hound in his presence,—degraded, humbled, and cowardly. Even in the quiet of Lindendale, I suffered personal ill usage,—blows! ay, and confinement to my own apartment under the goiership of Juba, and the prying watchfulness of my own maid. The stigma of insanity, the threat of immuring me again as a lunatic, was held out as a perpetual bugbear to my excited fancy, and the apparent freedom which I enjoyed in society only rendered more intolerable the actual bondage of domestic tyranny.

"Do you wonder now at my exultation, when death restored to me, the freedom which was my birthright! Do you blame me for not assuming the weeds of mourning, when I was celebrating my emancipation? Oh! had you known my deep and abiding hatred of him who lay, a disfigured corpse before me, you would rather have marvelled at my calmness. But you look incredulous."

"Yours, is certainly a most wild and singular narrative," was my reply.

"Ay, I see how it is," said she, while that wild glare so like incipient madness lit up her eyes, "the very magnitude of my wrongs, deprives me of credence and sympathy. You remember the form of a demi-god, which he bore; and, you are not willing to believe, that it enclosed the heart of a demon. Be it so. I ask no pity: I walk the world as one who wanders amid shadows. I find amusement, but no fellowship. I have learned a lesson of distrust, which has embittered every fountain of enjoyment; and I, therefore, ought not to blame others for cherishing suspicions, which yet I would fain allay."

I never saw Mrs. Allonby again, but a few years since I learned that she had died, a moping, melancholy maniac, whose vindictive and mischievous temper rendered it necessary to subject her to the closest restraint until physical weakness had deprived her of all power of evil. Even to this day, I am puzzled to decide whether her story was a true record of the sufferings she had actually undergone, or whether it was only a string of fancies, indicative of incipient insanity. Perhaps the truth lies between the two opinions, and the details of unmerited ill treatment which had driven her to the verge of madness, were mingled with the wild vagaries of an excited imagination.

From the Poughkeepsie Journal.

## THE AMBITIOUS MOTHER.

George Somerfield was my early friend.—We had roamed together through the various paths of science and literature, and he had greatly endeared himself to me by an unswerving rectitude of principle, which characterized all his struggles to emerge from obscurity and attain that eminence which was the reward of his untiring and well-directed exertions.

He selected a wife who possessed great strength of intellect, and extraordinary beauty. She was the only child of opulent parents, whose blind partiality and excessive indulgence had rendered her haughty and imperious, and in place of that meek submission and patient forbearance which invest woman with so much loveliness, and which the trials peculiar to her sex have made so indispensably necessary to *her* happiness, as also that of *all* by whom she is surrounded, Emma Somerfield was satisfied with nothing short of absolute authority and unlimited control, which extended even to the feelings and affections of her two daughters, of whom Rebecca was the older.

Though not surpassingly beautiful she was endowed with those qualities which might be said to render her surpassingly good: gentleness, meekness, and kindness, combined with a love for all, were the characteristics which endeared her to every heart.

Martha, the younger, possessed greater personal attractions; neither was she deficient in those mental graces, which will continue to charm long after every trace of beauty may have been effaced by the blighting hand of disease.

Their only brother, Charles Somerfield, was one of those quiet beings, who, without any apparent effort, wins the respect and admiration of all who can appreciate intellect and acquirements of the highest order, accompanied by an unobtrusive and retiring manner, with a heart feelingly alive to the sorrows and wants of those about him.

He had just returned from a long absence, during which he had pursued such a thorough course of medical study as eminently qualified him to obey the promptings of his kind and generous nature, and minister to the maladies of his fellow-beings.

As he was seated with his sisters around the centre-table, on which an astral lamp was burning brightly, discussing the probability of his professional success, they were interrupted by the announcement of Sumner Wesley, a tall, fine-looking man, whose gentlemanly deportment and easy address were calculated to impress a stranger favorably.

Rebecca greeted her guest with her wonted cordiality of manner, while the rose on Martha's cheek assumed an unusual brilliancy as she extended her hand, and her voice betrayed some trepidation when she said, "permit me to introduce you to my brother, Dr. Somerfield, Mr. Wesley.

Charles maintained his accustomed urbanity, but his practical eye did not fail to detect the perturbation of his sister, which was greatly increased when, after the usual ceremonies, Mr. Wesley proffered for her acceptance a beautiful boquet, which had apparently been selected with the utmost care, and invited her to accompany him to a party on the following evening.

When Mr. Wesley departed, Martha would willingly have retired to her room to escape the rallery which she saw, from the sparkling eye of her brother, was in store for her; but the door was scarcely closed on the retiring form of her friend, when Charles exclaimed, with great vivacity, "now for that boquet; allow me the privilege of dissecting it for you."

"I suppose," said Rebecca, "you consider yourself quite an adept in that art; but I assure you at the commencement, that in analysing Sumner's boquet, we shall fathom the secrets of his heart."

"So much the better," said Charles, and poor Martha's flowers were soon scattered on the table. "First—here is a rose, which is beauty. Ah ha! a little flattery for you, my fairy queen; but never mind, that is the way with this love-making. Next—a violet, modesty; and *there* is a tulip, which, if I mistake not, is a declaration of love. I suppose," he continued, "we are now to infer that your beauty and modesty have called forth an avowal of the tender sentiment."

"So much," said Rebecca, "for expressing one's self through those smiles of God's goodness, as some author has happily termed flowers."

They had proceeded thus far with their analysis, when the abrupt entrance of Mrs. Somerfield suddenly terminated their conversation on this subject; but Martha's feelings were not now to meet the gentleness which characterized the humorous remarks of her brother and sister.

As the mother advanced towards the happy trio, the bright smile vanished from the lips of Martha, and the cheerful expression of the doctor's face gave place to that of unfeigned astonishment, when, in a tone in which harshness rather than gravity seemed to predominate, she said, "pray, Miss Martha, what excuse did that *detestable* Sumner Wesley offer for calling again this evening. He surely could not have employed the former one of business with your father, for

he well knows his term of absence has not expired."

Tears were her only reply; while Charles, pointing to the disbanded bouquet, informed his mother, that this, together with the invitation to the party, had procured them the favor of Mr. Wesley's call.

"Favor, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Somerfield. "I presume you are not aware that his principal recommendation is his extreme poverty, yet he presumes to aspire—"

"Allow me to interrupt you, dearest mother," said the doctor, "by inquiring if the young gentleman in question has any glaring fault of character that thus embitters your feelings? As his arrival in this city was subsequent to my departure from it, I must rely on the opinions of others with regard to him, rather than my own observations."

"He has not been very energetic in the acquirement of his profession," replied Mrs. Somerfield, after a moment's deliberation.

"Mother," interposed the gentle Rebecca, "do allow that charity which I believe you to possess, to extend to Mr. Wesley. Has he not contended successfully with the scorn which proud worldlings have poured on him, and, despite adverse circumstances that would have discouraged any but one of his gigantic mind, he has made such acquirements as will, I trust, enable him to pursue his professional duties in a manner so exalted as to gain him universal commendation."

"And what have you to say in behalf of your friend," asked Charles, addressing Martha. "Whither has that bright spirit fled?" he inquired, as he now for the first time perceived her seat was vacant.

"Martha," answered Rebecca, "like a true military tactician, retreats where defence is impracticable—or, in more fitting language, her kind nature cannot brook these hostile feelings towards one to whom she is so warmly attached; and, lest she should be led to make a hasty reply, she retires when Mr. Wesley's merits and demerits are, as at present, the subject of free discussion."

"I hope," said the doctor, "my mother has not forgotten that she was privileged to make her own selection, and will, from kind regard to the best feelings of her daughter, allow her the same liberty."

"Indeed, sir," she replied, "I cannot now, nor *never* will, willingly, consent that the beautiful and gifted daughter of Emma Somerfield should become the wife of an obscure, pennyless lawyer—and, Rebecca, I wish you instantly to communicate to her my decision, which is definite, and from which she must *never* expect me to retract."

As soon as Rebecca, in obedience to her mother, had left the parlor on her painful er-

rand, Charles inquired what was his father's opinion of Mr. Wesley?

"I have not troubled myself to ascertain," was his mother's reply. "Martha has not now to learn (as you are well aware) that my authority is undisputed, and alone a sufficient reason why she must at once abandon the thought of an alliance with that *despicable* man. What audacity, what impertinence on his part, to suppose for a moment that I would consign my daughter to the mortifications, the parsimony, the disgrace which would be the legitimate consequences of such a union. The thought is truly intolerable," and so exasperated did Mrs. Somerfield become, that she concluded by saying—"I should most heartily rejoice in Sumner Wesley's death."

"Mother!" exclaimed the doctor, in deep amazement, "can it be possible that such a thought should ever have intruded itself into your mind, and have been suffered to obtain utterance from your lips. Where are we to look for all that is amiable and lovely, if a mother's bosom be not found the repository? Think me not deficient in filial respect," he continued, as he hurriedly walked the apartment—"when I assure you, the discovery I have this evening made, has given rise to feelings of surprise and regret which know no bounds. It has shown me clearly as 'if written with a sun beam,' that wealth is merit in your estimation; and that you have coolly and deliberately resolved to sacrifice the happiness of your daughter at the shrine of your ambition. You have evidently been thwarted in your expectations for Martha; may I not inquire whom you have selected as worthy this inestimable gift?"

"That I have had my plans respecting her, I admit," returned Mrs. Somerfield. "You doubtless recollect the gentleman with whom we became acquainted at the Sulphur Springs in Virginia—Mr. Emerson, of Philadelphia."

"Augustus Emerson! I would you were really acquainted with him, if it is to his keeping you wish to commit the happiness of your daughter."

"Why? What objections can you urge against him? If I mistake not, it is to you Martha is indebted for her introduction to Mr. Emerson," said the mother, with much earnestness.

"I admit," replied the doctor, "that I introduced him to my sister, but it was on the recommendation of Walter Insley, in whom we had at that time unlimited confidence; but he has, as you well know, since proved a most consummate villain. That Augustus Emerson is, in all respects, fitted to be the associate and friend of such a man, I firmly believe—if every species of immorality and

vice are the necessary qualifications for forming the basis of such a friendship."

"That Mr. Emerson has the air and manners of a gentleman, you will not pretend to deny; and you will oblige me by naming your authority for thinking otherwise," said Mrs. Somerfield, haughtily.

"My informant was a recent class-mate, one whom I have never known to indulge in slander, and who has long been familiar with the character of Mr. Emerson. He represented him as wealthy, and of a highly respectable family, but a man with whom any mother, possessed of maternal feelings, would shudder to see her daughter connected. To conclude, I have been taught in these two instances, what should long since have been indelibly impressed on my mind, 'that appearances are very deceptive.'"

Having said this, with a hasty good-night, Charles left his mother to brood in vexation over her disappointment at this unexpected development of Mr. Emerson's character, and sudden demolition of her fondly cherished hopes with regard to Martha, whom Rebecca found in her room, with her arm resting on a dressing-table, from which an untrimmed lamp was diffusing a dim lustre over the objects by which she was surrounded. Observing, with pity, the pensive attitude of her sister, Rebecca approached her, and playfully laying her hand upon a small volume that was open before her, (which she recognized as the Pleasures of Hope, a favorite poem with Martha, that now appeared to have lost all power to charm) she said in a cheerful tone:

"— can the noble mind *for ever* brood,  
The willing victim of a weary mood?"

When she finished speaking, as the delicate hand on which rested the fine forehead of her sister was withdrawn and extended to receive hers, Rebecca started involuntarily at the death-like pallor to which the bright glow of health had given place.

Had she acted from choice, rather than necessity, she would have instantly returned to her mother and exerted her argumentative powers in Martha's behalf; but she knew too well the inutility of such a course, and immediately set about communicating, in the most gentle manner, the unjust decision of their imperious mother.

I say *unjust*, for, by *what authority* does a parent presume to destroy the brightest hopes and highest anticipations of earthly happiness which a child has indulged until they seem an important part of existence? Where is the boasted maternal affection, ardent and strong as the love of life, of that mother who looks calmly on the unceasing efforts of her daughter to suppress every word which could

possibly betray the withering desolation within, until the victim sinks, either into a state of hopeless and lasting despondency, or seeks refuge from feelings that "crush the life from out young hearts," in an early tomb?

Martha heard the unexpected message from her mother without evincing much increased agitation, save that of deep, labored respiration, while across her brow settled a shade of sadness; and her pale lips were firmly compressed, indicating but too plainly the intensity of thought and feeling within. At length, rousing from her painful reverie, she raised her eyes with an expression of deep melancholy to those of her sister, and said, in a firm but low tone—

"Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,  
Bright dreams of the past which she cannot destroy;  
Which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,  
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.  
Long be my heart with such memories filled,  
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;  
You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang 'round it still."

This was her only comment on Rebecca's communication, but it was unfailing in its sad office work. From that hour all buoyancy of feeling vanished, and her health so rapidly declined, that when the family were summoned to the drawing-room to greet their father, after his protracted visit to England, which urgent business had rendered indispensably necessary, Mr. Somerfield was shocked and surprised beyond measure at the marked change in his lovely daughter.

Concealing, as far as possible, his astonishment at that for which he was so entirely unprepared, he kindly inquired of her if she had been long ill?

"Several weeks," was her brief reply, and the bright tear-drops trembled on her long dark lashes, as she glanced at her emaciated fingers, from one of which, in extending her arms to embrace her father, had fallen an elegant diamond ring, that was presented by him on the day of his departure for Europe, and on which was inscribed, "The Parting Gift."

Her agitation became so great, that Charles, after gently replacing the ring, privately proposed to Rebecca to retire with her to her apartment, and endeavor, if possible, to soothe her excited feelings.

All the kind efforts of this excellent girl seemed likely to prove fruitless; after several vain attempts to banish the bitterness of the past in weaving for Martha a bright tissue of the future, she took from its accustomed resting-place her Bible, and seating herself beside her sister, said, as she imprinted a kiss on her pale forehead—"permit me, dearest one,

to exhibit to you a few of the bijoux contained in my invaluable casket. *This book,*" she added, "has been to me as a beacon-light to the tempest tossed mariner. How often, during those periods of intense suffering to which, as you well know, this frail frame has been subjected, have I drawn consolation and encouragement from its precious promises! That it may direct me to look with the eye of faith to Him, who is able so abundantly to pour in the balm of consolation on the wearied spirit, is my warmest wish for you, who are indeed but my second self."

"I will endeavor to listen attentively," replied the desponding Martha, and Rebecca read aloud, as follows:—"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee.—Wait on the Lord: be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass."

After reading the above, in connexion with other passages alike consolatory, as Rebecca closed the sacred volume, she felt that her labor of love was amply compensated by a smile, which once more restored to something like their original beauty the attenuated features of her sister; and her "heart beat tumultuously with joyous emotions" when Martha said—"How greatly am I indebted to you, my dear sister, for the hope and trust with which you have this day inspired me. You have taught me by your judicious selections from that Holy Book, to cast aside the broken reed on which I have leaned until it has pierced my very heart, and rely on the arm of Omnipotence to sustain me under every trial. I think I shall in future beware how I again permit 'any of the gems which I have garnered in my early youth, to flash their brilliancy between me and Heaven.'"

But to return to the group in the drawing-room: Mr. Somerfield embraced the opportunity when left alone with his wife and the doctor, of asking the latter if he had prescribed for Martha, and anxiously inquired what he supposed to be the nature and cause of her illness?

"It is a malady of the heart!" returned Charles.

"A disease of the heart!—and incurable do you think?" said his father, without comprehending him.

"Not if I may be allowed my choice of remedies," he replied, at the same time glancing significantly at his mother.

"I presume no one feels disposed to dictate you in this matter. What course would you think best to pursue?" continued Mr. Somerfield, supposing, from the great and sudden change in Martha's appearance, that she was the victim of actual disease.

"My first step," said Charles, smiling, "would be to replace that organ, of which in Martha's case there has been an entire loss, with one that is in a perfectly healthy state, save, perhaps, one indelible impression."

Mr. Somerfield being relieved in a great measure of his alarm by the last remark of his son, which acquainted him with the true state of affairs, asked "to whom he would apply for the remedy?"

"With the permission of my parents, to Sumner Wesley," was the answer.

"Let us no longer treat with levity this subject, which has really assumed a serious aspect," said Mr. Somerfield. "If there be so strong an attachment existing between Martha and Mr. Wesley, as I see no reasonable objection, she has my consent to consult her own feelings, and act accordingly; and you, Emma, will, I trust, fully concur with me."

Charles having already ascertained his mother's opinion, and having also said all that he considered necessary or becoming, hurriedly withdrew when she was thus appealed to.

"George," returned Mrs. Somerfield, "it is vain to request a concurrence which I cannot conscientiously render. I consider it a duty that I owe myself and family, if I have any regard for our future reputation, to withhold my approbation from such a union."

"I hope, my dear," said the husband, "you are influenced rather by unfounded prejudice, than cogent reasons. Do you recollect that it is our duty to counsel in this case, but that we have no right to control? Shall we reward the cheerful obedience of our child with cruel disappointment, and envelope the spirit of this hitherto bright and joyous being, with a mantle of impenetrable gloom? Shall we bring upon ourselves a fearful accountability, by destroying the happiness of one whose pathway it should be our pleasure to strew with flowers? I entreat you to beware how you assume an authority with which you are not delegated." After pausing a moment, he concluded by saying—"I apprehend that Mr. Wesley's *circumstances* oppose in your estimation the insurmountable barrier; if so, Emma, we at least, *at present*, should be the last to name such an objection."

"Why do you give the words *at present*, so much emphasis," said Mrs. Somerfield, looking inquiringly into the face of her husband.

He made no reply, but it was evident from the sudden paleness which overspread his fine features, and the tremulous motion of his lips, that something inexpressibly painful was struggling for utterance.

For a moment, all the proud and ambitious

feelings of the woman were emerged in the more tender emotions of the wife. Taking Mr. Somerfield's hand, while deep anxiety was depicted on her countenance, she said—"Speak, George. What has happened to agitate you thus? Do not attempt to conceal any thing from me."

After gaining sufficient self-control, he said—"Emma, I am bankrupt?"

Had a "thunderbolt fallen at the feet" of Mrs. Somerfield, she could not have recoiled more horror-stricken than at this unexpected communication from her husband. To have, in a moment, all the ambitious schemes which she had been for years maturing, thus frustrated; to see herself compelled to descend from the dizzy height from which she, in fancied security, had so long looked in disdain on those below her, was more than her proud nature could brook. She was laid fainting on the sofa, and Mr. Somerfield immediately summoned his children to attend their mother.

After using efficient restoratives for her, he acquainted them with the embarrassed state of his affairs, and further informed them, that having perfect confidence in the integrity of Sumner Wesley, with whom he had met in London, (whither he had gone immediately after receiving a letter from Martha acquainting him with her mother's hostile feelings towards him) he had committed the settlement of his business to him, requesting him, if possible, to satisfy the just demands of his creditors, and inform him speedily of the result.

The sudden and intense excitement occasioned by the overwhelming intelligence from her husband, was productive with Mrs. Somerfield of a violent brain-fever, attended with delirium, which, after continuing unabated for several days, at length yielded to depleting remedies. She received every attention from her family which kind feelings could suggest, and unwearied patience and assiduity bestow; and when reason resumed her sway, and long exclusion from the world by the debility consequent upon the severity of her illness, together with the means used for its removal, had afforded time and opportunity for reflection, and a critical examination of conduct and motives, Emma Somerfield was a different woman.

The furnace of affliction through which she had passed, had removed the dross of erroneous opinions, and had shown her the utter vanity of setting "her affections on things on the earth, rather than on things above." When the straitened circumstances of her husband demanded an entire change in their domestic arrangements, also the abandonment of their present abode, which was one of almost princely splendor, for a small, plainly-

furnished house, where all their servants, save one, were to be dispensed with, and the most rigid economy practised—not a murmur escaped her lips. She was cheerful herself, and encouraged a contented disposition in all about her—leaving no effort untried to sustain Mr. Somerfield under his reverses, and to restore Martha to her natural vivacity.

After the family had been for some time established in their new home, while Charles was paying them a visit, he observed Martha arranging, with *unusual* care, a vase of rare flowers, which she had cultivated with her own fair hands.

"What mean all the preparations which I have witnessed to-day," he enquired.—"Whose exquisite taste are these beautiful flowers intended to gratify?" he added, as he playfully abstracted a white rose-bud from the vase, and entwined it in the rich dark curls of Martha, that shaded a cheek which now gave every evidence of a perfect restoration to health.

"Allow me to reply, brother Charles," said Rebecca, who had also been silently regarding her sister. "Martha wished, very much, to surprise you; and had vainly endeavored to exact a promise of secrecy from me."

"A recent letter from England, informed us that Mr. Wesley was about to return, and (very unexpectedly to us) he brings with him a competency for our father, which he has honestly rescued from the general wreck."

"Proceed," said the doctor, as he plainly perceived that the greater secret was yet untold.

"Well, to make a grand expose," continued Rebecca, "we shall look for his arrival the day after to-morrow, and on Thursday of next week, Martha is, by the consent of our parents, to become Mrs. Wesley."

"By your permission, take the flowers," said Martha, looking archly at her sister.—"Since Rebecca has chosen 'whatsoever ye would men should do to you, do ye even so to them,' for her rule of conduct, I presume she will not object to my telling you, that she is at the same time and place to become the wife of the Rev. Frederick Beaumont, of Boston."

"Yes," said he at length; "six months have passed since I commenced this picture. To-morrow the Duke comes; and the head of Judas is still unfinished. It *must* be completed," he resumed after a pause, "it must be finished to-night. If not I am ruined. My patron will dismiss me and then the triumph of my tormentor will be complete. How long and how painfully have I studied to give a proper expression to Judas and yet I have not succeeded."

He sat down and sketching the head again, sighed despairingly and then erased it. No sooner had he done this, than the door opened and a tall and athletic man entered the apartment. He was the Prior of the convent. A smile of triumph played on his features, as he walked up to the artist.

"Leonardo Da Vinci," said he, "my triumph is complete: your work will not be finished to-morrow, and you will be dismissed from the Duke's service, which will be your just reward," and he laughed loud and scornfully.

Leonardo fixed his dark eyes calmly upon the speaker and eyed him with an artist's vision. At length he replied,

"And who, but you who have every day interrupted me, has detained me!"

"Senor Da Vinci," said the prior ironically, "I congratulate you on the Duke's favor, when I have given an account of your punctuality."

"I can assure you I shall not lose it," replied Leonardo.

The prior laughed aloud and quitted the apartment.

"Yes," repeated he, "I shall not lose it." He took up his pencil and in a quarter of an hour, cried out in an ecstasy of joy, "I have it now! I have it!"

The hours flew by, and the picture was finished at day-break.

"Now," said Leonardo, as he lowered a curtain before his great work, "now for my triumph."

"Well," said the Duke, walking up and giving Leonardo a friendly shake of the hand, "you have truly had a short time, but so small the more honor. But I forget, gentlemen," said he to the persons present, "allow me to introduce you to Senor Leonardo Da Vinci, of whose skill you all have heard. Da Vinci bowed. Then turning round, the Duke said "remove the curtain." Leonardo stood pale and immovable, and the prior, confident from the artist's manner that the work was unfinished, pulled aside the curtain, when the complete picture was exposed to view. A murmur of applause ran through the crowd, and all eyes were fixed on the prior and Judas.

"It is he! it is he!" they exclaimed; and to the monk's confusion, he beheld his own portrait on the shoulders of Judas. Leonardo was silent: his triumph was complete.

## THE ARTIST'S TRIUMPH.

It was about twilight, when, in the refectory of the Dominican convent at Milan, might have been seen a man, apparently in the meridian of his days, with a high forehead, regular features and calm dark eyes. He was seated before a large, unfinished picture, with his head leaning on his hand and gazing thoughtfully on the canvass. Suddenly he sighed, and then rising paced the apartment quickly.

Original.

# MASKING AND UNMASKING; OR, THE BARONET'S SECRET.

BY F. A. DURIVAGE.\*

"The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman."—*King Lear*.

## CHAPTER I.—THE FARM HOUSE.

THE Castle of Elinwood stood in the midst of a wide and valuable domain in one of the northern counties of England, and was a place of great antiquity, maintained by its different possessors in a state of perfect repair. From time to time, various architectural additions had been made to it, but all these were executed in good taste, so that the antique and Gothic character of the original pile had not degenerated, at the period of our story, the events of which occurred during the reign of Charles II., of virtuous and moral memory. Like most of the old castles and strongholds in northern England, it was the scene of many strange tales and amazing traditions, all of which were duly credited by the honest yeomanry of the district, and, related by some garrulous old crone or gossiping village-attorney, formed the staple amusement of the winter evenings and Christmas holidays. Foremost among these legends and most religiously believed, was the story of a certain familiar or Demon visitor, said to make his appearance at midnight to each lord of the castle on the day of his taking possession. A certain quaint hand-bell was preserved at Elinwood, fashioned in the shape of a grim-cup—or rather in that of the Father of Evil himself, the clapper to which represented that singular elongation of spine, which forms so characteristic a feature in the *personel* of the Fallen Spirit, and is duly delineated in all the portraits of his sable majesty. This bell, it was averred, was always rung by some fatality on the night on which the heir took possession, and its tintinnabulary summons was as invariably answered by the presence of the spirit. Whether his mission was for good or for evil was unknown: but the fortunes of the lords of Elinwood fluctuated like those of all other families, and the ignorant and superstitious failed not to attribute them to the caprice of the Demon of the Castle.

At the point where our story commences, the Lady Adelaide Armitage, and her lovely and accomplished daughter Mary, a girl just blooming into womanhood, had received a peremptory summons to quit the castle—which the former had considered her's, together with other possessions, in virtue of her marriage with General Sir Albert Armitage, an accomplished gentleman and soldier, who had served with distinction in the civil wars,—been honored with the favor of his royal master on his restoration, and brought home to Elinwood in triumph the beautiful wife he had married in Flanders during a tedious exile, which he bore with the firmness of a man. He was not permitted, however, long to enjoy the delight of wandering with his wife and daughter

among old remembered scenes of his native country, for a few months after his return, an insidious disease undermined his constitution, and he was laid to rest beside the bones of his ancestry, with martial pomp and music, amidst the tears and regrets, not only of his heart-stricken Adelaide, and his loving and lovely child, but of all his friends and tenants. This event was the commencement of all the cares and troubles of his widow, whose life had hitherto been one of sunshine and joy, but who now found herself, in the first months of her mournful widowhood, compelled to encounter the hostility of certain relations of her late husband, who laid claim to her property, and forthwith instituted a *suit* against her to obtain it. They grounded their demands on the alleged fact that Adelaide l'Alberg had never been married to Sir Albert, and they challenged her to adduce legal evidence. None such, however, was forthcoming—no marriage certificate could be found among the papers of her late husband, and when she sent to the village where she had been wedded, she found to her dismay, that the little Lutheran church, in which the ceremony had been performed, had been destroyed by fire, together with all its records. The vast estates which were theirs by right, accordingly passed away from the widow and child, by a formal decree of the law, and they were ordered to depart forthwith from those venerable walls which she had been so long taught to consider their inalienable heritage. A property of small value, which she had inherited from her father, was all that remained to Lady Armitage in her native country, to which she now proposed retiring. This terrible change of circumstances, would not, however, have sufficed to bow down the serene and uncomplaining spirit of the lovely and unfortunate lady—but it pierced her very soul to think that she was now, in the eyes of the world, a degraded being, shorn of her fair fume, and able to transmit to her poor child—her adored Mary—only a heritage of shame.

It was a gloomy autumnal day—that in which the bereaved pair—the widow and the fatherless girl, looked their last on Elinwood, and betook themselves to a small farm-house, occupied by a humble friend, Dame Ashton, a tenant of the estate, from whose roof they were to depart by night to a neighboring sea-port, thence to embark for Rotterdam in a small packet. They were accompanied to the farm-house by a strange attendant—a rustic mechanic by the name of Walter Mortmain—a mason by trade—whose story was enveloped in a web of mystery. He was a coarse, but hardy and jovial fellow, who, some four years before, had been a very gossip in his speech, a roystering blade at village fairs and wakes, and a very boon companion at the ale-house. I forgot to mention that Lady Armitage and her daughter were absent from the castle on the day which proved fatal to its lord. He had, for some days previous shown such decided symptoms of improving health, that the physicians pronounced him wholly out of danger, and the invalid had compelled his wife and child, who had both been constant watchers at his bed-side, to accept the invitation of a lady who resided a few miles from Elinwood, to pass the day at her house. During their brief

\* Note.—The author is indebted for the frame-work of this story to *Les Mémoires du diable*—a French vaudeville.

absence, his disorder took an unfavorable turn, and they were summoned back in haste, but arrived only in time to close the eyes of the sufferer in death. Walter Mortmain had been with him in the scene, and it was supposed that the sudden death of his patron, to whom he was singularly attached, had affected his reason, for, from that time he had given utterance to no other words than "yes," and "no;" had forsaken his old haunts and his old companions, nor could the entreaties and remonstrances of his wife, extort the least explanation of this strange and sudden change in his habits and demeanor. His countenance was still as intelligent as ever, though a shade of care had fallen on it, and though his current appellation of Walter, the Mason, had been changed into that of Walter, the Idiot, by popular consent, the judicious few shook their heads whenever his name was mentioned, or his figure came in sight. Somehow or other, the village wisecracks attributed his conduct to the agency of the Demon of Elinwood. One thing was apparent—his attachment to the Armitage family was unchanged—he was always lurking round the castle, and whenever a group of his townsmen were discussing the long-pending lawsuit, involving the fortunes of the widow, Walter was always a greedy listener, answering, whenever he was appealed to, with his customary "yes" and "no." Such was the escort under whose guidance the ladies reached the farm-house, where they received a welcome from Dame Ashton, and her son Roger, the young man who was to accompany them to the sea-port, in the capacity of their servant. The evening of that day was tempestuous and rainy, and, as the hour for the departure of the ladies approached, the terrors of the night were increased by heavy thunder and incessant flashes of lightning. All of a sudden, there came a tremendous peal—the door was blown wide open by a furious gust of wind, and standing without, revealed in the broad blue glare of the lightning—appeared two figures—one, that of a stranger—the other, Walter, the mason. The former waved a farewell to his companion, then hastily entered the house and closed and barred the door.

He was a young and handsome man, with long dark locks, worn after the Cavalier fashion of the day. His broad-leaved hat, which he lifted from his dripping curls, was graced by a crimson plume. Flinging his black cloak upon a chair, he disclosed a rich crimson dress, slashed with black satin, and daintily embroidered with gold; his throat and wrists were graced with ruffles of costly lace; but he wore high and heavy horseman's boots, with huge heels and spurs, and a broad buff belt sustained a pair of pistols and a rapier, the indispensable accompaniments of a travelling gentleman of that period.

"Good evening, ladies," said the uninvited guest, in a pleasant and manly voice. "Unpleasant weather, is it not?"

"Who are you?" asked Dame Ashton, who first mustered courage to address the stranger, "that comes into farm-houses at such a time of night, without asking by your leave, or *wish* your leave."

"Farm-houses—or castles—night or day—'tis all the same to me," replied the stranger, with a merry laugh. "I am one," he continued, more after the manner of a person speaking to himself, than of one addressing his companions; "accustomed to make a reception for himself. By virtue of that habit, I will take a seat in your chimney-corner, my good dame." Saying which, the gentleman suited the action to the word, and seizing a poker, commenced a very scientific research into the glowing embers. Perceiving Roger, Dame Ashton's son, watching his motions attentively, he called out to him:—"Ho! there, sirrah! Bring another billet of wood here—for the love of heaven, do something to make yourself an useful since you can never be an ornamental member of society. Ah! there's a blaze, indeed. Glorious! Well, well—I deserved it—eight hours hard riding, over rascally roads that completely broke down the best hunter that ever followed a hound. But I forget myself—" he added, drawing back from the fire. "Am I so unfortunate as to terrify these ladies?"

"I must confess, sir," said Lady Armitage, "that your sudden appearance somewhat disconcerted me."

"I beg a thousand pardons," said the cavalier, in an earnest manner. "Fear nothing, madam—nothing from me—from any:—Heaven watches you—when I have succeeded in dissipating your fears—your distrust—we will converse in a friendly manner. Meanwhile with your permission, I will warm myself, for it is colder here than where I came from."

"Never was a truer word!" shouted Roger, involuntarily as he thumped the table with his huge brown fist; but he turned deadly pale, as the stranger, whose attention was attracted by the remark, fixed his black penetrating eyes upon him, and smiled with a peculiar meaning.

"Put on more wood, my sagacious friend," said he; "the young lady trembles, I see."

"Not from fear," murmured Mary.

"You see, madam," said the stranger, rising, "that I am unused to good company, and have yet *fit* manner all to learn. But I mean well, madam—and if, as I think, I can materially serve you—I will cheerfully afford you all the aid in my power."

"You, sir?" exclaimed Lady Armitage, in a tone of astonishment and incredulity.

"Ay, madam, I came not here by chance, but on your account."

"On my account?"

"Yes, Lady Armitage."

"You know me, then. And pray, sir, who are you?"

"Did I inform you, madam," replied the stranger, with a half-suppressed sigh, "you would not have the least confidence in me; and to enable me to serve you, I must exact a blind reliance."

"Such a feeling is rarely inspired at first sight, sir," replied the lady.

"I am aware of it, madam," returned the cavalier; "but, permit me to ask you—what do you risk? On

your side you have nothing to lose—on my part I offer every thing to gain."

"My law-suit, sir?" inquired Lady Armitage.

"Nay, that is lost beyond redemption. But I have other means of serving you—means of my own."

Here Mary drew her mother aside, and said in a low voice, "I know not why, dear mother, but this young gentleman seems, in my opinion, to merit the confidence which he requires."

"I cannot," replied the lady, "place implicit confidence in a stranger. Sir," she continued, raising her voice, "before we proceed further, I must request to know your name."

"I will not hesitate, madam," replied the cavalier, "if you insist upon it. My name is Robert. Some," he continued, fixing his eye upon Roger as he spoke—"some call me—Robert, the Devil—excuse me, ladies, but such is the fact."

Roger clasped his hands together in silent horror, convinced, now, that the evil spirit of Elinwood was before him.

"Robert! what a pretty name!" said Mary, half aloud. "You think so, Miss Mary?" asked the stranger archly, catching at the exclamation of the girl.

"What! do you know *my* name?" cried Miss Armitage.

"Yes; by *heart*," responded the courteous cavalier.

"Sir," said Lady Armitage, somewhat sternly, "do not lead us to imagine that you are willing to sport with our painful situation. Once more, who are you?"

"Have I not told you frankly?" replied the cavalier: "do you exact farther confidence on my side? Call me—think me what you will—I am your protector. The key to this enigma will be given you, at the expiration of one month—in the Castle of Elinwood. And now, on this spot—before I re-commence my wayfaring, I will, in a few moments' private conversation, state to you the terms which will enlist me—heart and hand—in your cause."

This was the signal for the withdrawal of Dame Ashton, Roger, and the young lady, the latter remaining just without the door of the apartment.

"We are alone, sir," said Lady Armitage, "permit me to request you to be brief."

"Will you accept my services?"

"Your conditions?"

"Hear them. But let me forewarn you that I am one of an exacting spirit. A most iniquitous sentence has deprived you of your property—your name—your social standing. I pledge myself to restore you all at the expiration of the present month, on one condition—the hand of your daughter."

"The hand of my daughter!" exclaimed the lady. "Your arrogant demand compels me to insist upon an answer to my former question—who and what are you?"

"I belong to a good family—but let that pass. Reflect upon your circumstances, madam—bankrupt, houseless, your very fame assailed! By me you will be restored to wealth—to honor—will you do nothing for me in return?"

"Give back to me my fair name," said the lady, "and I will pray for you on bended knee. Give back the priceless reputation they have despoiled me of—and take back the wealth you recover—the castle of Elinwood itself is yours—but my child——"

—"Cease, madam," said the stranger, proudly, while a slight flush mantled his cheek. "Am I doomed to misconstruction? You offer me money—I ask for woman's love."

"Then, sir," said the lady firmly, "let this conversation end—I have listened too long to your extravagancies."

"And refuse me, madam," asked the stranger, mournfully.

"Positively."

"And I accept you." These words struck upon the ear of the desponding cavalier, charming his senses like the sweetest music. And Mary of Elinwood, stealing to her mother's side, radiant with blushes, smiled upon him like a celestial vision.

"Yes, mother," said the girl, earnestly? "Yes, sir stranger—I believe in you. Restore name and fortune to my mother—overwhelm her enemies with shame—and then come back to us in triumph,—and my hand is yours."

The cavalier touched the fingers of the girl, and bowing low over them, raised them lightly to his lips.

"I ask but one month," he said, "to execute my projects—to secure triumph. Behold," he added, flinging his cloak about him, "I am even now ready to depart on my mission."

By this time, Dame Ashton and her son, curious to learn the result of the interview between Robert and Lady Armitage, had returned to the apartment.

"I am anxious, sir," said Lady Armitage, "to learn by what means you propose to succeed."

"That, madam," answered the adventurer, "must remain for a short time a secret—but I will tell you all in a month's time, at the Castle of Elinwood, in the presence of your false and avaricious connexions. With your permission, and that of Mistress Ashton, I will take you to London with me—he will be useful."

"Certainly," replied the lady, "I am perfectly willing to transfer his services to you."

"And I have no objection," said the dame.

"Dullard!" said the cavalier, "take up thy baggage, and deposite it in the conveyance. I must have thee with me, to point out the persons of those who have plundered and outraged this suffering lady—lout as thou art. Madam," he added, "before leaving you, permit me to confide to you this portfolio;" and he placed the article in the hands of Lady Armitage.

"They contain," continued our adventurer, "papers that I dare not carry with me in my perilous enterprize—since, were they taken from me—or even should you lose them, madam,—all would be lost—oh! lost, beyond all hope."

"But, sir," said Lady Armitage, "are they not of a nature to compromise me, as well as my child?"

"Fear nothing of that sort," replied the adventurer. "Should you open the portfolio, regard the seal upon

the papers sacred—at least, until the eventful month has expired. If I do not then return—and that will be because I have failed, and fallen—I authorize you to read the papers—and—and,” he continued with emotion, “to select an advocate more fortunate than myself. Ladies—farewell—let hope and confidence be your companions. I will restore your rights, avenge your wrongs—or die for you, happy in that event, since failure would take from me all that I live for, the claim to the sole reward I value.”

A wave of the hand—a smile and bow—and he was gone with his companion.

“Is this a dream?” said Lady Armitage, “an illusion? This strange adventurer—the promise of my daughter’s hand—can all this be real?”

“For my part,” said Mary, cheerfully, “I feel confident he will fulfil all his promises.”

“This port-folio,” muttered the lady, “doubtless contains the solution of the mystery. I will open it.”

“No, no, mother,” interposed the daughter—“he forbade its being opened.”

“I think not,” said Dame Ashton. “He only requested that the seal of the papers inside should not be broken.”

“Oh! I will respect the seal,” said the lady—“but one word—a single word—would relieve me, in part, from the cruel anxiety I suffer.”

“Well then, mother,” said Mary, bringing the lamp from the table, “let us open the port-folio—but respect the stranger’s papers.”

The lady eagerly opened the port-folio—and took thence a sealed packet, on which was written a single line. With a faltering voice she read aloud:—“THE DEVIL’S DIARY.”

A crash of thunder broke over the farm-house roof. Mary shrieked and dropped the lamp, and total darkness reigned throughout the room.

## CHAPTER II.—THE MASKED BALL.

A princely mansion in one of the most fashionable squares of London, gleamed with lights, and resounded with music and revelry, on the occasion a mask ball given by a baronet of wealth and distinction—Sir John Fleming, at which his family relations and numerous friends, comprising a wide and brilliant circle, were present in full costume.

Sir John Fleming was one of the heirs who had recently come into possession of the estates of Sir Albert Armitage, who had, in fact, formerly resided in this very house, and the present entertainment was given in order to convince the corrupt fashionables of the court circles, that, by their lavish hospitality, the selfish heirs were fully entitled to the award of the law. Sir John was a man past the middle age, whose principles, at least his political ones, were supposed to be somewhat chameleon-hued, but whose external manner had all that high finish and elaborate refinement so necessary in a courtier of Charles, the second’s time. In league with him a near connexion, a sharer of the spoils, and present also at the ball, was Captain Etherage, a selfish man, a miser and a gourmand—a little fat oily man,

some forty years of age. To his share had fallen the castle of Elinwood. Colonel and Lady Saint John, the former a roystering cavalier in youth, and now a boon companion, the latter, “fair, fat and forty,” a magnificent woman by universal consent, both of them great gainers by the law-suit, lent their presence to the ball, and assisted the bachelor, Sir John, in dispensing the hospitalities of the evening.

The guests were dressed in a variety of fancy costumes, but all were masked in the closest manner. Conspicuous among them, was a very gentlemanly representative of the Prince of Darkness, in appropriate costume. This fallen angel was the life and soul of the evening, for he sustained his character with infinite spirit, and made a deal of mischief. He seemed to know the name and private history of every body present, besides, there was something in his style and manner that struck all observers as new and original. Was he the being he professed to imitate? His knowledge and malignity would seem to argue that he was. At any rate, the universal consent of the guests conferred on him the respectful title of *Monsieur le Diable*.

Among the ladies present, were two, who, unlike the rest of the company, wore dominoes in addition to their masks, and as a more perfect disguise than fancy dresses to their persons. We might make a mystery of these unknown characters, but we prefer to confide their secret at once to our readers; they were Lady Armitage and her daughter. The former had come to London on what some might deem a sentimental mission, to endeavor to recover the miniature of her late husband, which her rapacious relatives had inhumanly refused to restore to her, though she claimed it as her personal and inalienable property. She had procured, through the medium of a faithful friend, a card of invitation to the ball, and, as all the rooms in the mansion had been thrown open, she had made her way to a certain boudoir, where she had recognized the treasured miniature hanging over a mantle-piece. The necessity of this episodic explanation will be apparent to the reader in the course of this chapter.

Let us return to other characters. In a richly-draped alcove, sat the representative of the Prince of Darkness—*M. Le Diable*, with the lovely Lady Saint John.

“This *tête-à-tête* is useless, sir,” said the lady. “I know before-hand what you would say to me.”

“Impossible,” replied the *Diable*.

“Wedded to my duties, I turn a deaf ear to the lovesuits of the gallants of the court.”

“But, madam, I am no court gallant.”

“Who are you, then?”

“*Le diable, ma belle dame, comme voyez. I assure you, moreover, that I have not the remotest thought of making love to you.*”

“On that condition, then, I grant an audience.”

“I would speak to you,” said her companion, “not of the present, but the past. I would speak to you of the former kindness of Lady Armitage. I would speak to your heart, madam, in the name of her rights, so basely trampled under foot.”

"How, sir!" cried the lady, "was it for this you drew me from the ball-room?"

"Yes," said the mask. "My heart bleeds for Lady Armitage. I came to London to restore that lady to her rights, and by all that's holy, they *shall* be recognized."

"Her rights indeed!" repeated Lady Saint John, with a scornful laugh; "*her's!*—the rights of an adventuress."

"The rights of one as far above you, madam, as the star above the valley. A blameless child—a stainless wife. I know her story well—and *yours*. Approach nearer," he added in a lower tone. "I will tell you of a lady, young, beautiful—the pride of her father's heart, who fled with a nameless and ruffianly fellow—wedded him in secret, and became a mother under the cloud of mystery. She deceived her trusting father, and who, after her first husband, abandoned almost as soon as known, had died in a ditch, *dared* to receive the addresses of an honorable cavalier, and never had the frankness to avow to him the story of her secret folly."

"Spare me!" said the lady.

"I have proofs of all," continued the stranger; "letters from yourself—a settlement upon a nameless boy—all, all, madam, recorded in the *Devil's Diary*; and I will make them public unless—"

"Mercy! mercy! I will grant every thing you wish."

"The restoration of Lady Armitage's property?"

"Yes, yes, all that you ask."

The stranger professed his perfect satisfaction, and then, leaving the lady, sought out Captain Etherege, who was impatiently counting the minutes that divided him from Elysium—the supper-table. He drew the captain apart.

"Have you nothing on your conscience, sir!" was the singular salutation of the stranger.

"Nothing, sir," replied the portly captain, somewhat fiercely, as he laid his hand upon the hilt of his rapier.

"Not even *truffles*?" pursued the stranger, in a low hissing voice.

"*Truffles!*" faltered the captain.

"Truffles—truffles, sir," repeated the representative of the Evil Spirit. "You see I know you, captain—all your early history—all that transpired in your exile. Permit me to repeat an anecdote. There were two misers at Toulouse in 16—no matter for the year. One was an Englishman. I shall not name him—the other a Frenchman—an octogenarian, one M. de Terras. Both were rich—both gluttons. Congeniality of disposition brought them together. In an unhappy hour, M. de Terras made a will in favor of his English friend. From that hour the latter entertained designs upon his life. He resolved various projects for the accomplishment of his ends, and one night the Englishman compelled his friend to eat an enormous quantity of truffles—the next morning the victim was no more."

"Impossible! Incredible!" exclaimed the captain.

"I will always maintain that the host is a calumniated character—an injured Amphitryon."

"I thought so, at first," said the stranger, "but a

little circumstance substantiated the fact. The victim had time to write to his attorney—'Sir, that rascal has killed me with champagne and truffles, for the sake of my estates. My will is in his favor, but here is a codicil which renders it void, and gives my property to my relations.' Ha! ha! ha! Capital, isn't it?"

"But it is untrue!" roared the captain.

"Fact, upon my word," said the stranger. "The man of business suppressed the codicil, I know, but it is in my possession."

"Yours?" exclaimed the captain, recoiling.

"Mine. The heirs of M. de Terras are no more, but by means of this document, I can wring from you, Captain Etherege, the property you withhold from Lady Armitage. You see I have you in my power. Do you accede to my terms. Will you give back the spoils?"

"Will you give up the codicil?"

"In eight days—at the castle of Elinwood."

\* \* \* \* \*

We shall take the liberty of listening to part of a conversation between our friend Robert, (for all our readers are perfectly well aware that the mischief-making Mask was no other than that gentleman,) and Sir John Fleming.

"It is useless to deny, Sir John," said Robert, in reference to something that had just fallen from the lips of the host, "that you are expecting a foreign embassy from the government."

"Well, sir, what have you to say against it?" inquired Sir John, haughtily.

"One word of mine could crush your dearest hopes," replied the other with equal hauteur. "Have you done nothing—no act—which, if once known and trumpeted abroad, would blast your expectations?"

"None, sir," cried the baronet, fiercely.

"My memory is far less treacherous than yours," said the Mask, sneeringly. "I recollect as well as if it were yesterday—*your first embassy*. When the royal army was in the field, you were sent on a delicate mission to one of the parliamentary leaders. You betrayed your trust for gold—the royal forces were defeated, and, had justice been awarded you, you would have dangled from a gibbet!"

"Vile calumniator!" cried the baronet, furiously. "I dare you to your proofs."

"I will produce them, sir," replied the mask; "they are in black and white—in the *Devil's Diary*. There, sir, is registered your traitorous letter to the Round Head leader—and here, sir," continued the mask, producing a paper, "is an authenticated transcript of that letter."

"Powers of mercy!" cried the baronet, "who are you? But whoever you are—give up these damning proofs, and name your reward."

"Full restitution to the Lady Armitage."

"I accept your terms. When will you give me up the letter?"

"In eight days—at the castle of Elinwood."

"I will be there," replied the host, and the mask left him.

"Who can he be?" muttered the baronet. "No matter—unless a stranger, a few moments will decide—for at midnight all my guests are bound to unmask. The hand is almost on the hour. Patience! patience!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Mary of Elinwood was standing in an alcove, lost in reverdy, when hasty footsteps fell upon her ear, and her mother stood before her.

"My child!" exclaimed Lady Armitage. "Here is your father's miniature." And she displayed the cherished treasure. "But I fear I have been seen. Let us fly from this house. I fear not disgrace, for I have but rescued my own property, but, oh, I fear these heartless wretches will deprive me of it."

The young lady shared the apprehensions of her mother, and the guiltless but agitated pair were preparing to quit the hall, when the voice of Sir John was heard exclaiming in a loud and angry tone—

"Guard all the doors. Let no one pass upon your peril there!"

In a moment, Sir John Fleming and his guests made their appearance in the great saloon.

"A theft!" exclaimed Sir John; "and in my house."

"Yes," replied Etherege. "A female mask was seen to enter the boudoir, and possess herself of the miniature set in diamonds, which hung above the mantle-piece."

"It is true," cried Lady Saint John. "The miniature was taken, but the diamonds are untouched."

"The culprit will soon be disclosed," exclaimed the host. "The hour of unmasking has arrived. 'Tis midnight!"

Before the last stroke of the clock had died upon the ear, the guests had all unmasked, with the exception of Lady Armitage and her daughter. A crowd gathered around Robert, who obeyed the order, but no one present knew him. He was still a man of mystery to them.

"Well, ladies," said Sir John, coldly, addressing the two masked females, "are you afraid we shall be dazzled by the radiance of your charms?"

"Remove your masks!" cried several voices.

Mary uttered a faint exclamation. She was unknown—unsuspected by Robert, yet there was something in her voice that appealed to his heart. He stepped to her side.

"Fear nothing, ladies," said he; "you are in the house of Sir John Fleming, who will permit no scandal to disgrace it."

"Sir," said the baronet, "I wish to gain information on the subject of a robbery."

"A robbery!" exclaimed Robert, scornfully. "If I heard rightly, a miniature was taken, but its costly setting untouched. This is no robbery—'tis an affair of the heart—one of those secrets a man of gallantry would scorn to probe—at least, in public."

"What right have you to meddle in this business?" exclaimed Colonel Saint John, pressing forward.

"Back, there," cried Robert, sternly. "I take these ladies under my protection; they shall receive no injury

while I am present. They were not aware of the regulations of our host—nor shall they yield to requisitions so uncivilly expressed."

"We shall see that," retorted the colonel.

"You shall see it," rejoined the stranger. "I will answer for these ladies."

"And who are you yourself?" cried the colonel, in huge contempt.

"Ask that question of your lady," replied the stranger—"of Captain Etherege—of Sir John Fleming himself. In eight days I will answer every thing in the castle of Elinwood. Ladies, here is my servant—entrust yourselves to his care, and make good your retreat. I will cover it, and guard this door, and swear to Heaven that no man shall pursue you."

"Now, gentlemen," exclaimed Saint John, "let us make an example of this scoundrel."

"What! twenty against one," cried the stranger, "is that your chivalry? But let me tell you, gentlemen, I have my friends and backers."

As he spoke these words, he drew a brace of pistols from his vest. The swordsmen retreated in dismay. The stranger fired his pistols in the air, and when the smoke curled lightly upward, he was gone.

#### CHAPTER III.—THE KEY TO THE MYSTERIES.

We do not seek, like many story-tellers, to tantalize our readers, by keeping them from the *denouement* of our marvellous though veracious history, and shall therefore hasten to bring it to a close. Lady Armitage and Mary, after effecting their escape from the masked ball, repaired, as speedily as possible, to the castle of Elinwood, there to await the arrival of their deliverer. Day after day rolled heavily away, and at length that on which they were taught to expect the developement of his mystery, yet still the stranger did not make his appearance. On the morning of the eventful day, however, Roger arrived. He brought ill tidings, for he reported, to the inexpressible grief of the ladies, that, on the morning after the masked ball, Robert had been discovered, and received a dozen challenges in consequence of his conduct at the masquerade. He accepted them, and left Roger, full of hope, but charging him, in the event of his not returning, to repair to Elinwood, and authorize Lady Armitage to make any use she saw fit of the redoubtable papers given to her charge. While Lady Armitage was yet plunged in grief at the reception of this unwelcome news, she was annoyed at the announcement of guests from London—and Sir John Fleming, Captain Etherege, Colonel and Lady Saint John, were ushered into her presence. They came prepared to treat with her for the purchase of the dreaded "diary" which contained so much that it was all-important for them to suppress.

Quitting the presence of these persons, always hateful to her sight, and particularly now, in a moment of overwhelming misery, Mary sought refuge in the great stone hall of the castle, where she sat down beside a table, and endeavored to collect her thoughts. On that table lay the famous hand-bell which bore so conspicuous a part in the traditionary history of the lords of the

castle. Almost unconsciously she touched the bell—the mysterious stranger instantly appeared, and, before she could utter an exclamation of surprize, clasped her to his heart.

"Tell me," she cried, when a few words had been exchanged, "are you well—are you uninjured?"

"I was wounded, but, thank Heaven! I am here in time. Perhaps I was too chivalrous to espouse the cause of two unknown ladies."

"Had you no suspicion who they were?" asked Mary.

"None whatever."

"You perilled your life, dear Robert, for my mother and myself."

"Is it indeed so?"

"You have acted nobly," continued Mary—"while I have to ask your pardon for a fault committed. Curiosity prompted me to look at the Diary. I did not break the seal, but a loose sheet fell out. Your name attracted my attention—can you pardon me for reading it?"

"Your curiosity was but too flattering," replied Robert.

"I return you the paper," continued Mary, handing her companion a MSS. sheet. "It contains nothing to your disadvantage. If it did, I should discredit it, after your generous—your noble conduct."

"We are lost!" cried Lady Armitage, rushing into the hall in tears. "My friend!" she cried, after warmly welcoming Robert, "I fear even you come too late. The mercenary and base wretches who have pursued me so relentlessly, have consummated their evil deeds. I was alone—with your precious papers in my hand, when they burst in upon my privacy, seized the MSS., and committed them to the flames."

The countenance of Robert fell. "All is indeed lost!" he cried, "yet stay—let me examine this precious sheet." He perused it attentively, and his countenance brightened. "Lady Armitage," he cried, "the indiscretion of your daughter was providential. Here is a clue to the mystery. When your husband died, he had a servant—a counsellor—a confidential friend; where is he?"

"Walter, the Mason, who was always prowling about the castle, appeared in the hall as these words were uttered."

"The poor idiot!" said Mary, in a low voice, looking at him with a compassionate expression.

"The idiot!" repeated Robert. "Honor—reputation—fortune—depend on him. It is a fragile hope, but we must try. Walter! my honest friend! who called you? Do you know me?"

"No," replied the idiot.

"I am a friend of the family, and enjoy the confidence of Lady Armitage. You are called Walter Mortmain, the mason."

"Yes," replied the mechanic.

"You remember your former master, Sir Albert Armitage."

"Yes."

"You were with him in his last moments."

"Yes," replied the mason, mournfully.

"He confided to your trust a secret of importance."

"Yes," replied Walter, looking attentively at the questioner.

"Money? Papers? A deposite to keep?"

"No," replied the idiot.

"To carry to some one?"

"Ha! A mason! a thought strikes me," said Robert to the ladies. Then addressing the idiot, he asked—"To wall up?"

"Yes," replied the mason, quickly.

"In the cellar?"

"No."

The agitation of Robert was intense. "Sir Albert said to you," he continued, "Walter, take your tools: you took your hammer—your trowel—your plaster, and he carried you to a certain part of the castle. Here my memory fails me; will you refresh it?"

"No!" replied the idiot, sulkily.

"I know well," continued Robert, impatiently, "that Sir Albert charged you to confide the secret only to a person who would repeat four words agreed upon between him and you."

"Yes," said the mason, with a look of surprize.

"I knew these four words, but I have forgotten them. Sir Albert told me to repeat them to you. But he is dead."

"The hateful 'yes' was again repeated by the mason, but in a tone which indicated deep grief.

"All which belonged to him, belongs to his widow and his child?"

"Yes."

"Will you disclose to them the hidden treasure?" asked Robert. "See—they demand—they beg it of you."

"Yes, yes, Walter," cried Lady Armitage, with clasped hands and streaming eyes.

"Walter looked fixedly upon his mistress, and heaving a deep sigh, while the big tears coursed down his brown cheek, answered, "No."

"Oh!" exclaimed Robert, "what a cruel thing is probity without intelligence. I almost despair. But hear me, Walter; you will not reveal the place where the treasure lies concealed; perhaps it is your intention to appropriate it to your own use."

It seemed as if all the blood in the body of the mason rose to his head, as he fixed his fiery eyes upon his questioner, stamped his foot, and shouted—"No!"

"In vain you deny it," said Robert. "And the law shall compel you to speak out."

"No," replied Walter, doggedly.

"Does nothing appal you? nothing move you?"

"No! no!" replied Walter, as he withdrew from the hall, slowly shaking his head.

Robert was in despair. He had bore up against every obstacle and difficulty—against danger, and deadly hostility, but he was completely baffled and disheartened, and replied to the inquiring looks, rather than the words of Lady Armitage. "Now, madam, we may say with truth, that all is lost."

"Not all," said Lady Saint John, entering the hall,

as the young man gave vent to the expression of his despair. "Lady Armitage, and you, sir—do not believe me an accomplice of the odious treachery just perpetrated. I renounce my portion of the estate surrendered to me by the law."

Lady Armitage had not time to reply, before the relatives and connections of her late husband made their appearance, and she saw Sir John Fleming preparing to address her.

"Madam," said the baronet, "the relatives of him you call your husband, are loath to permit you to live in want, and have determined to present you with no less a sum than £6,000 in the legal currency of this realm."

"Sir," replied the lady, proudly, "I reject and scorn this offering of your pity. The law may ruin—but never shall man possess the right and might to humiliate the lady of Elinwood—the wife of General Sir Albert Armitage."

"You never were his wife," said Captain Etherege, insolently.

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed Robert, "you know that assertion to be false."

"What does the gentleman observe?" inquired the captain superciliously, "what! is the Prince of darkness still here? I thought his 'occupation gone.'"

"Does my presence trouble you?" asked Robert.

"Not at all. I am only surprised at your assurance. The tables are turned, *Diavolo*—and your famous 'Devil's Diary' has been very appropriately committed to the flames. What a pity to put an end to your fine-spun romances!"

"I shall appeal," said Robert, "to the tribunal of justice."

"How?" cried the baronet.

"I will tell you, sir," replied Robert, his courage rising with the emergency. "I will support my suit with a thousand arguments—the love of the country for this noble family—the devotion of all who have approached it. Lastly, I will show this sheet, mysteriously rescued from the fate that overtook its fellows. Oh! do not tremble yet a while. This leaf proves nothing—says nothing against you, but it will testify to the reality of the Devil's Diary. And they will believe me, when I say that diary contained the history of your life, and the proofs of your crimes—that these proofs were collected by an old man who, master of your secrets, wished to abuse them to obtain the estate you coveted yourselves. I will tell all, gentlemen, and I shall be believed, for my words will carry conviction with them. I shall be believed when I declare that the Diary was written by a man who knew you all—by your attorney—*Capias, the honest man.*"

"Say it again!" shouted Walter, the mason, who had been an attentive, though unobserved listener to the preceding conversation, and who now rushed forward. "Say it again—those are the very words—the very words!"

Astonishment was pictured on every countenance; the face of Robert lighted up with joy.

"Walter!" cried he, "I say them once again. *Capias, the honest man!*"

"The very words!" repeated Walter. "The general, my master, sent you; I can speak out now; my master from on high permits it." And he fell upon his knees, and crossed his arms devoutly on his bosom.

"My good friend," said Robert, "may I now demand the treasure?"

"Ask any thing you will, sir," replied the mason, rising; "I am bound to obey you. You have spoken the words. Bring me a sledge-hammer," he cried. Roger speedily placed the tool in his hand. "Oh," continued the mason, addressing Lady Armitage, who had remained an astonished auditor and spectator of what was passing, "if you knew what it has cost me to keep my master's secret! But I swore to him to speak no other words than 'yes' and 'no,' 'till the hour and the man should come. And so they called me idiot—and lunatic. Away, there!" he cried with sudden energy, as he swung his hammer on high, and motioned all to stand aside, while he approached the large armorial 'scutcheon that projected from the stone wall."

"What would you do?" cried Sir John Fleming, as the mechanic poised his hammer in the air with both hands, and fixed his eyes on the 'scutcheon—"Break down our family arms? I will not suffer it."

"Stand back!" shouted the mason—"either you or the 'scutcheon falls—choose!"

The baronet recoiled, and the heavy hammer fell on the elaborated carving. The first blow shattered it, and disclosed an opening in the wall, from which the mason drew a casket and a roll of parchment.

"A treasure!" shouted Captain Etherege. "Notes! gold! papers! they belong to the heirs."

"Away with you," growled the mason, elbowing the captain aside, and approaching Robert.

"Here, sir; take them. You gave the signal—they are yours."

"Gentlemen," cried Robert, addressing Sir John Fleming and his relatives, "your reign is over. Here is Sir Albert's marriage certificate. Take it, Lady Armitage—be happy. And now, ladies and gentlemen, a word about myself. You took me for the Evil One—you were not far wrong—for I am a poor devil—of an attorney's clerk—the clerk of *Capias*—who executed the declaration of your dying friend, Captain Etherege—he was cognizant of the details of your mission, Colonel St. John—he acted as an agent for each one of you, and registered your secrets in the hope of making money by them."

"I'm off to London!" said the captain.

"So am I," said Colonel St. John.

"And so am I," observed Robert. "My task is ended. If I have done any good, I will not spoil it by claiming a recompense far—far above my deserts. Lady Armitage, I release you from your pledge. Forgive me for having dared to raise my eyes to one so far above my rank. Station, wealth fling a halo round yourself and your lovely daughter—I am poor and humble—farewell—for ever!"

He dashed his hands across his eyes, and turned to depart.

"Hold!" said Lady Armitage; "would you rob us of the pleasure of expressing our heartfelt gratitude?"

"A place in *your* memory—a thought, perhaps a tear, sweet Mary of Elinwood," faltered forth the young man—"is all I dare to ask." He would not trust himself to speak more. His foot was already on the threshold—Mary touched the magic bell.

A cry of joy burst from the lips of Robert. He sprang to the side of Mary, caught her hand, raised it to his lips, then turned inquiringly to Lady Armitage. Could she refuse?

The feastings and rejoicings that took place in the castle of Elinwood, on the occasion of the marriage of the young pair, it is not our province to record—nor the after happiness of bride and bridegroom—for we leave these matters to the imagination of our readers. But if any matter-of-fact person desires an authentic record, he must make a pilgrimage to Elinwood, slip a *douceur* into the hand of the old gentlewoman who displays the wonders of the castle, and bribe her to grant access to the archives of the family.

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## THE BARON'S KNELL.

BY J. H. DANA.

In the old town of Rudenberg there stands a square, massive, stone tower, green with moss, and shattered by centuries. The superstructure, according to tradition, was the work of the Evil One; and there is that in its gloomy old walls, the deep embrasures of the windows, and the scarred and blackened appearance of the building, which would seem to corroborate the legend. In this tower hangs a bell, of strange uncouth shape, but immovably fixed in masonry, so that no living mortal has heard it toll. The tradition goes, that bell and tower had the same origin, in the bargain of some erring soul; but with whom the subtle enemy made the compact is not so certain. Some assert that it was an Eastern Magi, skilled in all the learning of the Chaldees. Others say that it was a fair-haired lady from beyond the seas, one whose queenly port and dazzling beauty seemed almost supernatural. And others again say that the old tower was the residence of a bearded warrior who had fought in the Holy Land, and who brought back with him a train of Saracen servants, dressed with barbarous magnificence, and speaking in an uncouth tongue. But all agree in one thing. The first possessor of the place attained unbounded opulence, but died miserably after every descendant in the direct line had perished by violence. And strangest of all, the wizard bell tolled at every death, as if rung by invisible hands. But from the day when the last of the race perished, no mortal ear has heard the knell.

It was from a student at Leyden that I first received the true version of the legend. We had been sitting over a stoup of wine all the evening, leisurely smoking our meerschaums, until at length we fell mutually into a reverie which lasted a full hour. The room where we sat was one of those large old rambling apartments found in antique buildings, with grotesquely carved cornices, and ample fire-places surrounded with dragon heads. The fire had been suffered to burn low, so that at length the chamber was left in comparative darkness. Now and then a falling brand would cause the flames to leap fitfully up, making strange shadows on the wall; while ever and anon the sullen gusts without rattled the old casements, and wailed mournfully around the house. Suddenly the bell of the cathedral began to toll, and as the measured sound came booming across the night, we started involuntarily.

"Have you ever been at Rudenberg?" said my companion.

"Yes!" I replied, "and from your words, you were thinking of the strange old tower, with its bell."

"I was," he answered, lowering his voice, "have you ever heard the legend?"

I told him the versions that had been given me, but he shook his head.

"They are none of them right. I believe one of my ancestors was present at the catastrophe, and so the true tradition has come down in our family. We rarely mention it, '*Gott gebe uns Gnade*;' but you are a foreigner, and I will waive our secrecy for once.

"The real builder of that tower," he continued, drawing his chair close to mine, and speaking in a low, but distinct tone, "was a needy Baron of the palatinate, who suddenly rose to great power and opulence. The superstructure was built by torch light, and with almost incredible rapidity. But the greatest mystery attended the hanging of this strange bell, for no mortal eye, it is said, witnessed the act. The bell was found one morning swinging high up in the old tower; but, for many a long year, no one heard its voice. When the bells of the churches chimed out at wedding and christening, it remained silent. Other bells might toll at funerals, but not so it. While every steeple and tower in the palatinate rang merrily at victory, the iron tongue of that unknown bell spoke not. Men came finally to look on it with strange awe. At length the townsfolk heard a wild toll at midnight, and their blood curdled at the sound, so unlike all others was its unearthly tone. There was that in the voice of the mysterious bell, as if the insensate metal struggled to reveal some untold horror. Men shuddered as they listened, mothers hugged their babes to their bosoms, and maidens rose from bed and knelt before the crucifix until the fearful tolling ceased. That night few slept in Rudenberg. When morning dawned, the citizens learnt that, at midnight, just when the bell began to toll, the beautiful young daughter of the Baron had died, it was feared, by poison, administered by some unknown hand. And the bell had tolled at her death, but by whom the knell was rung, no man could tell.

"From that day, it was noticed, that a dark shade settled on the brow of the Baron. Meantime his possessions continued to increase, and while others lost, he gained. Whatever enterprize he undertook was sure to succeed. But child after child perished violently, and at every death that mysterious bell was tolled by unknown hands. These things induced strange suspicions among the townsfolk. They called to mind the poverty from which the Baron had sprung, they remembered the singular rapidity with which the tower had been built, and they thought upon that fearful night when the mysterious bell broke its long silence, and tolled at the death of his child. Whispers, at first scarcely breathed, but finally given utterance to even in the market-place, charged him with having entered into a bargain with the Evil One; and it was said that wealth and power was to be the portion of the Baron, but that one by one he was to lose his children as the forfeit, and that the

tolling of this unknown bell was to warn each victim that the hour had come. At length these rumors reached the ears of the Baron. He listened to them without any reply except a sneer, but those who saw that sneer shuddered when they spoke of it to their dying day.

"Years passed, and castle after castle was added to the domains of the Baron; but at every new acquisition another of his once fair family of children died. One was drowned; another was killed while hunting; a third perished by the hand of an assassin; and the fourth, and last, fell in a sudden fray; but though he died in a foreign country, and the news of his death did not reach the townsfolk for a week, they knew, by the tolling of the mysterious bell, that the last of the Baron's race was no more. The whispers of the citizens now became louder than ever. The Baron's wife had long since died, and it was said that his turn would arrive next. When they came to look back at the deaths of his progeny, they found that, by some strange coincidence, one of his children had perished on the same day, of the same month of each succeeding year; and it was predicted that, at the next anniversary, the Baron himself would die. But the stern old noble only scoffed at these whispers, and, as the day drew nigh, resolved to shew his scorn of the danger, by holding high festival in his castle. He caused, moreover, the bell, whose tolling had first produced these rumors, to be imbedded in solid masonry, as you see it now, so that no one could ring it. Then he made ready his feast.

"You must not suppose that every one shrunk, like the honest townsfolk, from the Baron's society. There were enough bold, bad men who laughed at what they called idle rumors, and were ever ready to pledge him in the wine cup, or follow him to the chase. Yet each of these men had some stigma attached to his name. One had plundered widows and orphans, a second had ravaged defenceless maidens, another was said to be a parricide, a fourth was suspected of sacrilege, a fifth had murdered his bride, and others had committed other acts, abhorred alike by God and man. On the countenance of each was written that at which holy hermits crossed themselves and prayed. And these men now gathered to the festival of their chief, mocking at the rumors that daily gained strength.

"The hall where the festival was held was a wide apartment, with walls so gloomy, and casements so deep, that the cheerful beams of the sun rarely found entrance within, or only played in sickly radiance on the damp, stone floor. But though such was the usual aspect of the room it was different now. Lights blazed in fifty places from the walls. A table, covered with the richest plate, stretched down the ample hall. Never indeed had the palatine beheld such an array of wealth, magnificence and profusion. Here was a rarely carved goblet from Italy, and there a Venice glass of unrivalled

beauty; golden urns and dishes glittered along the board; and the drinking cups of the guests flashed with jewels. Every viand that taste could suggest, or skill prepare, was arranged for the feast, while the richest and costliest wines blushed in golden ewers at hand. Servants, magnificently attired, moved noiselessly over the floor; incense rose up from tripods burning at intervals along the walls; and strains of music, from unseen performers, floated around, and dissolved the listeners into ecstasy. Well might the guests, thus surrounded by all that could delight the senses, scoff at the fears of the people, and deem themselves safe from harm. But ever and anon, as the wandering eye of a guest lit on the cold, damp wall, by some strange whim left bare of tapestry, he would shudder involuntarily, as if foreboding ill. These feelings, however, were rare, and did not interrupt the evening's hilarity. As the hours passed on, and the guests quaffed deeper of the glowing wine, their jests and songs and gaiety increased, until the hall rang with merriment. Many a wild deed was then related, at which good men would have turned pale, but which was hailed now with shouts; many a ribald song was sung, convulsing the listeners with unholy mirth. And thus hour after hour passed, while still the lights burned on the wall, the incense exhaled from the censers, and the music of the unseen performers filled the air. Midnight had come, when, with a scornful sneer, and then a gay mocking laugh, the Baron arose and spoke,

"'Fill high your goblets,' he said, 'fill to the brim,' and as he spoke he poured forth a bumper of the rich, red wine, while each guest followed his example. 'We will be merry to-night, brave sirs, in spite of the idle rumors of superstitious fools, and the lying prophecies of canting priests. Ho! midnight of the day, on which they said my race was to perish, has come, and yet here I stand, the last of that lineage, to mock at such fears. We will be merry to-night, gallants, and see whether the old bell can disturb our revellings. Better wine than this never crossed lip, nor ever did gay company meet at festal board. Lo! give us a triumphal song, a gay and exulting strain. Now, fair guests, join hands, and drink, one and all, my toast, 'Confusion to the foul fiend.' Quaff—quaff."

"And they quaffed the wine, and, amid strains of triumphal music, with linked hands, they shouted back the toast. But ere the huzzas ceased, the slow, measured tolling of a bell filled the apartment, and, as the revellers listened, their cheeks blanched, and their voices died in their throats, for well they knew that fearful sound. The music stopped in terror, and a dead silence reigned throughout the hall. Again and again the toll of that bell clanged awfully across the night, and the lights waned to and fro, as if flared by gusts of air. Each man drew closer to his neighbor, and all gazed in wild affright at their host. At the first toll of the bell, the exulting

smear had passed from his lips, and he gazed fearfully around, as if hoping that his ears deceived him, yet dreading the contrary; but when that unearthly sound penetrated, a second time, into the hall, and he saw, by the faces of the guests, that they too heard the knell, his countenance became ghastly as that of a corpse, and he clung to the table to support his tottering knees. And as the iron voice rung out again across the night, he uttered an agonizing cry, gasped for breath, and sinking down utterly into his seat, with the wine cup still in his hand, fell over at the twelfth stroke, dead on the floor. At the same moment the wind eddied through the casements, and the censers expired. Then mortal fear seized on the guests, and springing from the board, and climbing and struggling over each other, they hurried wildly from that fatal festal hall. As they rushed into the air, the room burst into flames. But they dared not look behind. With wilder affright they fled, while, at every step, came, borne after them on the breeze, the tolling of that fearful bell. It palsied their hearts, it smote their knees with weakness, it almost took from them their breath. At every stroke of that knell some long forgotten crime rose up to their memories. They paused not until they clasped, in supplicating agony, the rails beneath the high altar of the Cathedral.

“ All night that bell, rung by unknown hands, tolled on, curdling the blood of the listeners; and all night the shuddering guests prayed and knelt before the crucifix. When morning dawned, the bishop, preceded by the relics, and followed by his priests, entered the still smoking hall. They found the body of the Baron charred, blackened and mutilated; the face only was untouched by fire. But on that countenance rested an expression of fierce and utter agony, such as haunted the dreams of those who saw it to the grave. From that fearful night the Baron's bell has never been known to toll, nor could a thousand men move it in its bed of solid masonry.”

## THE BEAUX.

## A SKETCH.

BY MISS LESLIE.

## PART I.

It was on the afternoon of a bright balmy day in early spring that Sabina Westmore, escorted by her brother Orvin, arrived at the house of her father's cousin, Mr. Denning, on a long promised visit to Philadelphia. This invitation having been recently and earnestly reiterated in several of Mr. Denning's last business letters to Mr. Westmore, who was proprietor of a large cotton manufactory in one of the eastern states; her parents had consented to her accepting it. Sabina, the only daughter among four sons, had been educated entirely at home, and it was a severe trial for her father and mother to part with her even for a short season. But she was now eighteen, (looking at least two years younger,) and they thought it time she should see a little more of the world; her knowledge of society having, as yet, been confined to a very select circle in her native place.

When the carriage that conveyed Orvin Westmore and his sister from the steam-boat wharf, stopped at the door of Mr. Denning's house, in a very genteel part of one of the cross-streets, they perceived at each of the parlour windows, a young lady evidently watching for their arrival; the time of which had been previously announced in a letter from Mr. Westmore to Mr. Denning. The moment the strangers alighted, these two young ladies (who were both rather handsome, and very fashionably drest) ran out to meet them in the vestibule, saluted them with great cordiality, and ushered them into the front parlour; introducing each other as Ellen and Rosa Denning.

"We dine at three"—said Ellen—"and then papa takes his nap, and goes back again to his store till evening. There never was a man so given up to business."

"We were hoping"—said Rosa—"that mamma would have got home in time to receive you, but she went out directly after breakfast, in search of a house for Mrs. Macflit, who moves every quarter; and 'tis a chance if she is at home to dinner. But we never wait for her."

"I hope your sister Anna is well"—said Orvin Westmore—"I recollect her as a little girl when I accompanied my father to Philadelphia, about the time I had attained my tenth year."

"Yes—she was then a *very* little girl"—replied Ellen—"The truth is, Anna was engaged yesterday: and, she has in consequence received so many calls to-day, that being very delicate, she is quite overcome with fatigue. So that, just before your

arrival, she retired to her room, and desired to have her dinner sent up to her, that she may be fresh for evening."

Sabina did not exactly understand this speech, as was proved by her remarking to Ellen—"It must indeed have been very tiresome after being busily engaged a whole day, to be obliged to entertain a succession of visitors during the next."

The two sisters smiled—"Oh! you mistake entirely"—said Ellen—"Anna was not occupied with any particular employment yesterday—she never is—only she engaged herself to be married to Mr. Lankley, yesterday morning, as they were looking at a blue hyacinth in one of the back parlour windows."

"A daffodil you mean"—interrupted her sister.

"I believe, after all, it was a crocus"—continued Ellen—"However, by Anna's desire, Mr. Lankley staid till papa came home, to ask his consent. And pa' only took about ten minutes for consideration, as Mr. Lankley is quite a nice young man, with very pretty prospects. There was no time to consult mamma, as it is always uncertain whether she will be home before evening. She was out nearly all day yesterday, trying to bring about a reconciliation between the widow Huddleston and old Mr. Todgemore, who were to have been married next Thursday; and it was broken off, through the shameful interference of her sisters and his nieces. And when she came home, mamma was in high spirits with her success; and therefore she was very well pleased to hear of Anna's engagement. To be sure it is rather a sudden thing, as Mr. Lankley was introduced to Anna only about three weeks ago, at Mrs. Medley's squeeze. But love at first sight, you know—"

"Ellen, how you talk!"—interrupted her sister—"you forget that it is an old attachment. Cousin Sabina, they both went to Mr. Chassepied's dancing school when they were a little boy and girl; and they met every week at the children's cotillion parties. Once he was actually struck and knocked down on the ball-room floor by another little boy, to whom Anna (young coquette as she was) had previously engaged herself; and who was enraged when he went to lead her out to find her already standing up with Norbert Lankley, who had just asked her. The affair caused great talk through the ball-room, and gave occasion to certain predictions, which you see are now going to be realized. No doubt the intimacy would have continued; but that Norbert's family, shortly after, removed to the west."

"When is the wedding to take place?"—asked Orvin Westmore.

"Oh! there is no time fixed"—replied both sisters.

There was then a consultation *sotto voce* between the Miss Dennings as to which of the two should conduct Sabina to her apartment, and which should stay down to entertain her brother; the latter office being the most desirable. In this instance, as in most others, the younger sister carried her point.

As soon as they had reached the chamber allotted to Sabina, who immediately proceeded to take off her bonnet and shawl, and arrange her hair, &c., Ellen Denning said to her—"You must have found it very dull, travelling so far with only your brother."

"My brother is not in the least dull"—replied Sabina.

"Oh! no—it is easy to see that. He looks as bright as possible; though, as yet, Rosa has given him no chance of saying a word, scarcely. Rosa is a most excellent girl, but has always been considered rather too voluble. She is not aware how much she injures herself by this desire of monopolizing all the conversation. Gentlemen do not like girls any the better for talking too much. Now there is Anna, who scarcely ever utters a word, you see she is engaged before either of us; though somewhat the youngest. Anna is very amiable; but she is considered by no means the smartest of the family. But the truth is, foolishness takes better with gentlemen, than sense. I often wish I was foolish. But, seriously, did it not seem rather flat to be escorted by your own brother? I think I should die if I had to travel with nobody but Nick Denning. I suppose you each were provided with books, and read all the way along."

"Neither of us read at all"—replied Sabina—"everything we saw was quite new to me; and Orvin and I are never at any loss for conversation."

"But I see no object in talking to one's brother," observed Ellen.

"We met with several gentlemen who were known to Orvin"—said Sabina—"and he introduced them to me."

"Who were they?"—asked Ellen eagerly—"Did they come on all the way to Philadelphia? Are they in town now, or are they merely passing through? I must go down and beg your brother to use no ceremony in inviting to our house any friends of his who may chance to be in the city. We shall be delighted to see them. Any of them at all?"

"My brother"—replied Sabina—"being unwilling to trespass on the hospitality of your family, stopped as we came up, and engaged a room at the United States Hotel. His stay in Philadelphia will be very short, as he came merely to escort me."

"Oh! what a pity!"—exclaimed Ellen—"but of course he will be with us most of his time. I must go down and talk to him about it.—When you have finished your toilet, you will find us in the front parlour."

Having departed, and gone half-way down stairs, Ellen Denning came back, and putting her head in at the door, said—

"Cousin Sabina, as it is most likely your brother as well as yourself, may have forgotten that Anna is the youngest of the three, it may be as well not to remind him of it; lest he should chance to mention it after his return home. One would not like to have it known, throughout New England, that the youngest Miss Denning is going to be married before either of her sisters. Such things do not tell well. And then there is a great deal in people being easily pleased, and taking the first offer they receive. Poor Anna—she is so very passive—I must say that Norbert Lankley (though he may be considered quite a good match) never would have suited *my* taste."

"As there is no time fixed for the marriage"—observed Sabina, with a smile—"perhaps you may yet steal a march upon your sister, and be a bride before her."

"There is many a true word spoken in jest"—remarked Ellen, looking very complaisantly on Sabina.—"To be sure when one is surrounded with beaux, and in a house that is so much resorted to by gentlemen, the chief difficulty, perhaps, is in making a selection. 'Tis amazing how some families take—and others never have the least success. There are our opposite neighbours the Drawlings, with their six daughters, and four nieces—variety enough, you will say. Still, do as they will, there is a lamentable dearth of beaux among them. They formerly gave large parties every season, and invited half the world. But the gentlemen never came till supper-time, and then slipped off as soon as they had done their oysters and terrapin: and never had the civility to make a call afterwards: and were seen no more at the house till next year's party. Then the poor Drawlings tried *soirées*, and opened their house and lighted up their parlours every Tuesday evening, for the reception of all their acquaintances that chose to come. But the guests dwindled away, fewer and fewer every time; till at length they had scarcely anybody to receive. The last *soirée* consisted of one boy."

The young ladies were now summoned to dinner. Mr. Denning had just come home, and was heartily glad to find that his young cousins had arrived. He was accompanied by his son Nicholas, commonly called Nick—a youth of sixteen, who had recently completed his education at a provincial academy, and was now in his father's store. Anna did not appear; adhering to her intention of dining in her own room. As Mr. Denning had long since found the necessity of having a hired house-keeper, the table and all other domestic arrangements were very superior to what they would have been if left to the rule, or rather the misrule of his wife or daughters: the young ladies being almost exclusively occupied with what they called the beaux; and their mother, with officiously attending to the business of her numerous acquaintances.

As usual, Mrs. Denning was not waited for.

But towards the close of the repast she came in (looking much heated and tired), and sat down to table with her bonnet on; as she purposed going out again as soon as she had swallowed her dinner—she apologized to the Westmores for not having been at home to receive them; excusing herself on the plea that she had always so many things on hand that she scarcely knew how to turn herself or what to do first.

"Only think"—said she—addressing her daughters—"after I had found three houses for Mrs. Macflit, one up Vine-street, and one down Pine-street, and one in Chesnut—almost at Schuylkill, and after I had gone for her to Front-street, and taken her to see them all, not one of them would suit. And she said I dragged her about, and that she would get her son to inquire of a house agent, as she always had to do at last. Mrs. Macflit has an excellent heart. It is a pity she is always dissatisfied with everything. Then after I had got through Mrs. Macflit, I had to go to the cheap store up Fourth street above Callowhill, to buy some kitchen towels for Mrs. Puffin, who is so fat that she never walks: and her carriage is getting painted. She is afraid to trust her daughter to shop for her, as Mary Ann will never take the trouble to go to any of the cheap shops, because they are always in out-of-the-way places. And then I called at Mrs. Winceby's, and found that her two youngest children had been crying three days and three nights with the tooth-ache. Her husband was away in New York, and neither the mother nor any of the aunts had nerve enough to take the poor things to the dentist's, or to send for him either; as they could not bear to know that tooth-drawing was going on in the house. So of course I volunteered to accompany the children to Mr. Tenderhand's. And after the girl was done (whose screams to be sure were heart-rending) we were near an hour trying to bribe the boy into the chair; but all in vain. He got under the table and held fast by its legs."

"Why was he not seized, and put into the chair by main force?"—inquired Mr. Denning.

"It was impossible"—replied his wife—"Both Mr. Tenderhand and myself tried our utmost. We did, to be sure, dislodge him from his stronghold under the table; but he kicked, and plunged, and struggled, and bit us so, that we were fain to give up. Mr. Tenderhand protested against having anything more to do with the boy. So to-morrow I have promised his mother to try it again, by taking him to the new German dentist, Dr. Ketchum Von Klinch, who forces out your teeth whether you will or no."

"Mamma"—observed Nick—"when I was a child, I was always sent off to the dentist's by myself, and told not to show my face at home till my tooth was out. You never went with me."

"That was because I never had time"—replied his mother—"I could scarcely spare a half hour to go with your sisters"—

"Mamma"—inquired Ellen—"what did you

hear about Anna's engagement. Of course it is all over town."

"Why to say the truth"—replied Mrs. Denning—"I had so much to think of that I almost forgot to mention it, as I ought to have done. But I believe, generally, that it does not seem to be much known."

"So we concluded this morning"—said Ellen—"we happened to have so many visitors that we thought at first it was in consequence of the report but we find that none of them had heard of it till we told them."

"Papa"—inquired Nick—"did you mention it last evening at the Exchange, as the girls told you?"

"I don't know"—replied Mr. Denning—"I believe I did not. The news from Europe must have put it out of my head."

"Oh! pa—oh! pa"—exclaimed Ellen—"and did not you speak of it in at the store this morning?—or when you went to bank?"

"Not I, indeed"—replied the father—"I do not perceive in what way the engagement of a daughter of mine can interest the whole community. In my time these things were always kept quiet for awhile, and came out nobody knew how. And the young lady always at first denied her engagement, and blushed about it—and the young gentleman, when questioned, evaded giving a direct answer—and the families on both sides only hinted at the probability. Was it not so, my dear?"—addressing his wife.

"I believe it was"—replied Mrs. Denning—"But those were old-fashioned times—and you know we live in the age of improvement. The we hesitated about acknowledging an engagement lest something should occur to break it off. And now if that takes place, we just as coolly announce the breaking off."

"Yes"—said Mr. Denning—"with a view to it being publicly understood that the girl is again in the market, and the gentleman again at liberty."

"Nay now, my dear—you are too severe"—observed Mrs. Denning.

"Well"—said her husband—"you must not depend on me for spreading the intelligence of Anna's engagement to Norbert Lankley."

"Nor on me neither"—said Nick.

"I have heard of a practice that formerly prevailed in Holland"—pursued Mr. Denning—"that I think might very conveniently be adopted in our own country, while the present fashion lasts of giving immediate publicity to betrothments. This excellent Dutch custom was that of putting a board out at the front door, the morning after a matrimonial engagement had taken place in the house."

"Only give me the pattern"—said Nick—"and I will prepare a board myself for the purpose. We have plenty of old packing-boxes at the store; and I will have it out early to-morrow morning, by the time the news-carriers go round, and before the New York passengers start."

"The gentlemen will have their jokes"—said Mrs. Denning to Sabina, who sat near her.

"Papa is a privileged person"—murmured Ellen—"But Nick is not a gentleman."

Rosa Denning, for her part, had been exclusively occupied all dinner-time with Orvin Westmore, with whom she kept up an unremitting dialogue. She had managed to get seated next to him, and she devoted herself entirely to the handsome young stranger; officiously anticipating all his possible wants at table, listening with wrapt attention, and smiling graciously at everything he said; and looking up with gratified delight because he helped her to a potatoe. Orvin Westmore was much amused, and according to the practice of most young gentlemen, he trifled with her to her heart's content. Sabina, who seemed to find herself in a new world, thought she had never heard her brother talk so much nonsense. But she soon perceived that he was taking the Miss Dennings on their own ground, and she relied on his having too much tact not to know when to cease. She wondered if it would be expedient for her to humour their follies as he was doing.

After dinner, Westmore departed to his hotel; with pressing injunctions to return in the evening and bring his travelling companions with him, or any friends he chose.

Mrs. Denning, having dined in her bonnet, went out immediately on finishing her dinner to go in quest of a new seamstress to undertake some linen for Mrs. De Jerk's husband; his six last having been unable to make the collars fit. Mr. Denning took his nap, and Nick read at his novel, and then they returned to their store. Sabina asked for a book, having ascertained that the Miss Dennings were going to their beds ("their custom always of an afternoon") to render themselves, as they said, bright and fresh for evening.

"Is it possible?"—said Ellen—"that you are literary?"

"By no means"—replied Sabina—"I am only very fond of reading."

"How very queer!"—exclaimed both girls.

"Ours"—said Ellen—"is by no means a bookish family. To be sure Nick reads the sailor novels: and papa seems to have a strange fancy for the Pickwick and Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby. Books with such names cannot be genteel. As for poor mamma, she never has time to read; and we girls always have something of more consequence to think of. Anna tried reading for a little while, supposing it would be less fatiguing to her than walking in Chesnut-street; and there were some books procured for her, all of them recommended by Miss Chusewell; but the dear girl never could keep awake over any of them. None of the gentlemen that visit here are at all literary, except Mr. Jackaway Jempson, who writes poetry and reviews for the papers, and is anything but a good match. So we have put away all Anna's books; and she will care for them less than ever, now she is engaged. I believe they are on the upper shelf in the upper store-room. Come with me, and select any one you like. But let me cau-

tion you not to give yourself out as a reader. Reading girls never take."

"What is taking?" inquired Sabina.

"Now don't be so very innocent," answered Ellen Denning. "To *take* signifies to have beaux."

"What is having beaux?"—asked Sabina. "Are beaux lovers?"

"Pho! nonsense!"—replied Ellen—"I see you are something of a quiz—Beaux are not positively lovers; but persons that may some time or other become so—Men that one goes about with—Men that come to the house—The more beaux you have the better your chance."

"Chance of what?"

"Fiddlestick!—you know very well what I mean—Chance of marrying to advantage to be sure—"

"But should the pursuit of marriage be the chief business of a young lady's life?"—inquired Sabina, in a more serious tone.

"If she remains single, it is pretty good evidence that she is not attractive"—replied Ellen.

"Were that an infallible test!"—observed Sabina—"we should find among married women none but the best specimens of our sex; and among single women none but the worst—Even in my little experience of society, I have known wives (and the wives too of sensible men) that certainly possessed no charms either of mind or person. And I have also known females that in the autumn of life remained still unmarried, in whom notwithstanding, were united the best qualities of head and heart, and who retained the traces of beauty such as in youth must have been eminently striking. Is it impossible that a woman should continue unmarried from her own preference of a single life, from losing the lover to whom she had once been affianced: or from not having excited a corresponding sentiment in the heart of the only man to whom she could have ventured to entrust her happiness?"

"Dear me!—how you talk!"—said Ellen—"This comes of your books—I see you are already cut out for an old maid."

"I would rather be cut out for an old maid than for an unhappy wife"—replied Sabina.—"From much that I have heard, I believe that women sometimes accept the first offer they receive, for no better reason than the fear that it may be the last; or perhaps the only one: and wilfully consent to pass their lives with a man whom they can neither love nor esteem, rather than retain their maiden name."

"Well, I hope I shall not retain mine all my life!"—said the unimpressible Ellen—"Only think how disgraceful for the newspapers to announce the 'decease of Miss Ellen Denning at an advanced age:' and to have one's maiden name on one's tomb-stone."

Sabina saw that there would be no profit in continuing the argument; and standing on a chair to reach the shelf, she began to examine the books. The selection was good, but she found none that

were new to her. However, she carried to her room Miss Jane Austen's very entertaining novel of *Pride and Prejudice*; and, as is the case with all really excellent works, she found it improve on a second reading.

At tea, the whole family were assembled; Mrs. Denning having hurried home on finding it lamp-light; and, after a walk nearly to Kensington, in quest of a certain well-recommended seamstress named Maria Matilda Thimbleton, discovering her to be one of the identical six that had made unsatisfactory collars for Mr. De Jerk.

The Miss Dennings appeared at the tea-table dressed for the evening, as if adorned for company. She of the recent engagement also took her seat among them. Miss Anna was a dull heavy-looking girl, who seemed to have grown pale and spiritless for want of exercise both of mind and body. Her features were small and babyish; her complexion rather white than fair; her eyes large, blue, and sleepy; and her hair so light as to remind Sabina of Burns's "Lassie with the lint-white locks." She had a low drawing voice, and a manner that passed for amiable. Sweetness was her theory—foolishness her practice. Her sisters were taller, had better figures, more colour and more animation. Each in her own opinion was a beauty; and their perfect self-satisfaction prevented them from perceiving that Sabina Westmore was far handsomer than either. Because they were somewhat of blondes, they could not imagine the possibility of a brunette being, by any chance, regarded as a belle. Beside which, Miss Westmore was guilty of a taste for books, and the Miss Dennings were well aware that all their present beaux protested against what they called blue-stockings.

After tea, Nick retired to his room, with the last of Captain Maryatt's. Mr. Denning went first to the Exchange, and afterwards to an arbitration; having previously taken his wife to sit a few hours with a sick friend, who, during the day always had too many visitors, and who in the evening would have been very glad to rest in peace.

Between seven and eight o'clock, the beaux began to come; and at every ring at the door, the eyes of the young ladies grew brighter and brighter

still; and they stopped talking to bite their lips into fresher redness; and to place themselves in yet more graceful attitudes. Beau the first was the engaged one, Mr. Norbert Lankley, a very tall, very thin, very fair looking young man, with little twinkling eyes, and eye-brows arched up to a point. His bride elect contrived to put some expression into her sleepy orbs, at the sight of him, and held out her hand engagedly. He told her, in a very complimentary manner, that the length of his visit to her that morning, had cost him five hundred and twenty-six dollars; and he smilingly added that he feared he should find her a dear bargain. She informed him that she should be affronted if he said so. He then by way of pacification asked her if she did not know that she was dear to him. He was proceeding to play upon the word *dear*, (Mr. Lankley being a professed wit,) when finding that the equivoque was very puzzling to the misty comprehension of his lady-love, he explained that in consequence of the loss of time consumed in making her a morning visit, he had missed a valuable customer from the far west, who, after waiting for him awhile, had gone and suited himself at the next store. The young lady's reply was merely—"I suppose when people are engaged, they always forget what o'clock it is." They then retreated to the back parlour, where on a *chaise-longue* in the farthest recess, they held a whispering conversation, about nothing particular, and which might as well have been proclaimed from the house-top.

The beaux were all of similar stamp as to looks and manners; and all dressed in the extreme of the fashion, which made the Miss Dennings consider them as fashionable young men. The style of their hair and whiskers was a caution, as our friends in the west would say. As they came in, the visitors were all appropriated by one or the other of the two disengaged Miss Dennings; and great was the talk, and great the laughing. Observing at length, that Sabina was sitting alone on an ottoman, Ellen Denning led up to her a young man whom she introduced as Mr. Jackaway Jempon; and our heroine immediately recollected the name of the poet and reviewer that was a very bad match.

(To be continued.)

## THE BRIDAL EVE.

BY HARRIET BOWLES.

### CHAPTER I.

"WHAT a magnificent nuptial present!" exclaimed Mrs. Benton to her daughter, as, on entering the chamber of the latter, at Saratoga, they discovered a costly diamond necklace, with a perfumed note accompanying it, "Mr. Wallingford is indeed all that is generous and noble!"

The daughter's cheek became tinged with crimson, though a smile rose to her lip as she contemplated her lover's costly gift. At that moment her heart was torn by contending emotions; but alas! she knew that she could find no sympathy in her distress from her parent.

Mrs. Benton was a widow, with no child but her beautiful daughter. Aspiring, vain, and mercenary, she resolved that Isabel should make a brilliant match, and for this purpose the mother had brought her daughter to the springs, where her loveliness soon rendered Miss Benton the belle of the season. Her charms had conquered among others the *millionaire* of the year, a middle aged retired merchant; and, in obedience to her mother's explicit commands, was, on the ensuing day, to become the bride of Mr. Wallingford.

But Isabel, though feeling it to be her duty to obey her parent, could not submit to this doom without many and painful struggles. A year before she had met and loved a young painter, when on a visit to a friend in the country; and though they had not met for many months, his memory was still fresh in her heart, and she felt that though she might wed the wealthy Mr. Wallingford, she could never give him the affection she had already bestowed on the poor artist. As the day appointed for her union approached, her feelings became more and more acute, until now she could have flung herself at her mother's feet and begged to be released from her engagement, only that she knew her parent would prove inexorable.

"Alas!" thought Isabel, as her mother left the apartment, "there is no escape for me from this hateful alliance. And yet Mr. Wallingford is all that is noble and generous—yet—yet I cannot love him. Oh! Henry," she exclaimed, apostrophizing her absent lover, "would that you were here. But what do I say? For months he has not written to me, and alas! I cannot conceal from myself that I am forgotten. No, it is sinful in me thus to think of one who has deserted me. Oh! that ever he could forget those dear, dear moments when we walked together under the old avenue, while the moon simmered down through the leaves, and our hearts beat in unison with the music of all nature around us. Oh! Henry, dear Henry," and she clasped her hands, "that ever you should forget those hours."

"Nor have I forgotten them, dear Isabel!" exclaimed a voice beside her, that thrilled every nerve with ecstasy, and looking around she perceived her lover, who had entered the little parlor unperceived.

We will not describe the thousand things that were said at this meeting. Suffice it to say, they were like all lovers' protestations. But the explanation of Henry must be laid before our readers, though a in more succinct, and less broken manner, than he gave it. His tale, however, even as told by himself, was short. He had written, according to promise, to Isabel, but received no answer. Again and again he had written, but always with the like success, until at length his pride forbade him to write again. But his love had survived notwithstanding the apparent coldness of Isabel, and having incidentally heard that she was at the Springs, he had resolved to see her, and learn the worst.

"Then it was your mother that intercepted your letters," said Henry, when Isabel had, in turn, narrated her story—"and this marriage—oh! Isabel, dear Isabel, can you sacrifice yourself?"

What need to tell the result. Love ever triumphs, and it was arranged that, that night, Isabel should elope with her lover.

### CHAPTER II.

It was between the hours of two and three o'clock on the same night, that Isabel, who could not think of sleeping, stole into the little private parlor, that was adjoining to the chamber of her mother, and not far from the apartment occupied by Mr. Wallingford. The position of this parlor rendered it one from which a nocturnal flight was not only possible, but easy, for in this parlor there was a window out of which you could with ease step into the garden, and at the end of that garden was one of the leading streets of the town.

Isabel was seated at a table on which there was a small lamp and a tiny watch. The hands of that tiny watch seemed to her to be almost fixed, or to move as if nothing could induce them to go on to the hour of appointment. At first Isabel awaited the hour of rendezvous without hesitation, and without trembling; but when it was approaching to the hour for the given signal with her lover, her duty to her parent recurred to her, and she hesitated. Affection for her mother—for Mrs. Benton was still her mother—struggled long with her promise to her lover. At length she said,

"No, I cannot fly. My mother! harsh though you may be, I cannot cost you a tear. I will write a note for Henry, telling him I cannot keep my promise with him, and to-morrow I will throw myself at my mother's feet and confess all. She will, she *must* relent."

Accordingly she took up a pen, and hastily wrote a few lines to her lover, at every word blotting the paper with her tears. At length exhausted by her emotions

she leant back on the sofa to indulge in a fit of weeping. Long she wept, but finally nature attained the mastery, and like a child, worn out by grief, she sank insensibly to sleep.

The dawn was just beginning to break, when Mr. Wallingford, who chanced to be an early riser, passing down the corridor, perceived the door of Mrs. Benton's parlor ajar, with Isabel apparently unconscious on the sofa. Alarmed at the sight, he entered; but finding that Miss Benton was only asleep, he would have withdrawn, when his eye was attracted by his own name in the unfinished note on the table, and led by an ungovernable curiosity he read as follows:—

"It is the will of my unhappy destiny, combined with the desire of my mother. I must never see you again—never more listen to you; never—but why utter the word! To-morrow I become the wife of Mr. Wallingford; fly, then, from my sight—it is a sacrifice that I appeal to your honor to make—"

"Who can this gentleman be? Who is this mysterious lover of whom I have never heard? Alas! I fondly dreamed, Isabel, that you loved me, but I see now that I have been deceived and that your mother is, perhaps, forcing you into a union you ab—"

His words were cut short by a footfall. It was Henry leaping into the window, and Wallingford looked around. The rivals gazed at each other an instant, nor will we attempt to describe their feelings when they found that they were father and son. Their exclamations of astonishment awoke Isabel, who fainted, while, at the same instant, her mother appeared on the scene. The insensible girl was borne from the room, and then the young man, flinging himself at his father's feet, exclaimed,

"My father—my father! I am innocent, pardon me."

"Rise, Sir," said Mr. Wallingford, "I am no longer your father. I am your accuser, and your judge. Why have you come to Saratoga?"

"It was absolutely necessary for me to do so. Honor compelled me to come and see one who—is very dear to me."

"Very well; but then you choose to pay your visits to this very dear person at moments that are very equivocal—at three o'clock in the morning, for instance."

"Father, since you know all, why do you thus question me? Why thus interrogate me?"

"Because it is my desire to know the most minute details of your love for Miss Isabel Benton."

"And wherefore?"

"Because she ought to be my wife, and not yours."

"Then, Sir, you must know, that it is about six months ago, in a stroll through the Susquehanna county, whither I went as an artist, and under an assumed name, I met this young lady. Why tell the result? We loved. I did not reveal my real name, for

I wished to be loved for myself, and not as the son of the rich Mr. Wallingford. She promised to be mine ere parting; and we were to write to each other. But our letters were intercepted, and deeming she had proved false to me, I resolved to forget her, until last week, when hearing incidentally from a friend here, that she was to be married—though he did not say to whom—my agony drove me hither, to see Isabel, reproach her for her perfidy, and bid her an eternal farewell. Oh! my father had I known all, I would have suffered any thing, rather than have come hither."

"Henry!" said the father, wiping away a tear, "you have conquered. The love of one like me cannot be such as that a young man feels. The sacrifice will be less to me than to you. Take her, and God bless you."

The son fell on his father's shoulder and weeping, would have refused the boon, but Mr. Wallingford was inexorable, nor would he suffer the ceremony to be delayed more than a day—the ample settlement he made on his son fully reconciling Mrs. Benton to the match.

## THE BRIDAL.

### A SCENE FROM REAL LIFE.

BY ROBERT MORRIS.

THE scene was one of mirth, and joy, and loveliness, and beauty. Two spacious parlors had been thrown open in one of the largest houses in Arch street. Lights had glittered in the various chambers since early sundown—carriages by dozens had driven up to the door, each freighted with friends or relatives, so that the world without found little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that some extraordinary scene of festivity was in progress within the walls of that spacious mansion.

It was about nine o'clock when we entered. The two large parlors, brilliantly illuminated by gas, and glittering with a rich collection of young and beautiful females, each dressed in the most tasteful or gorgeous manner, presented a scene truly magnificent. For a moment the eye seemed to quail before the general flash, while the mind also grew dizzy; but these feelings lasted but for the instant, as friends were to be met on all sides, and we soon found ourselves mingling in the giddy and trifling conversation that too many of our fair countrywomen seem to delight in on such occasions. Still, as the first flash passed by, we paused to contemplate the scene in a calmer and more meditative spirit.

The party was a "Bridal" one, and the bride was the daughter of one of our most respectable merchants, a worthy, good-hearted man, who had devoted himself to his business, and paid no attention whatever to the frivolities of fashionable life. The bride seemed *very* young—not more than sixteen or seventeen. She could not be regarded as beautiful in the general appreciation of the word, and yet she had one of the sweetest faces that we ever saw. She had soft blue eyes, brown hair which fell over her shoulders in ringlets, a pretty and expressive mouth, with teeth that appeared to us faultless. Her complexion was clear, but her face looked rather pale, although at times it became flushed and ruddy as the rose. Her dress was of the richest white satin, and the ornaments of her hair and neck and wrists consisted almost exclusively of pearls. Her frame was slight and full of symmetry, and her voice was remarkable for the gentleness and amiability of its tone. We gazed upon her calmly for many minutes, and the thought passed through our mind—"So young, so fair, so delicate, so happy, and yet so willing to enter upon the severe responsibilities of the wife and the mother." "Who," we inquired of ourselves, "may read that young creature's destiny?"

Doubtless she loves the object of her choice with a woman's virgin and devoted love—doubtless she believes that the next sixteen years of her life will prove radiant with happiness, even more so than the girlish and sunny period which has but just gone by—and doubtless the youth who has won that gentle heart believes that he possesses the necessary requisites of mind and disposition to render her happy. And yet how often has the bright cup of joy been dashed from the lips of woman when about to quaff it! How often does man prove recreant and false! How often is he won from his home and his young wife, whose heart gives way slowly, but fatally and steadily, under the influence of such indifference and neglect!" But we paused and dismissed these gloomy reflections. The nuptial ceremony was pronounced—for a moment all was breathless silence—and then the busy hum broke forth as audibly as ever. The wedding was a brilliant one in all respects. It was followed up by party after party, so that nearly a month rolled away before the giddy round was over. The only one who did not appear to mingle fully in the general feeling, was the mother of the bride. She loved her daughter so tenderly that it seemed impossible for her to consign her to other hands. She was one of those women who devote themselves wholly to their children, and who have no world without them. On the night of the wedding, a tear would occasionally roll down her cheek as she gazed upon her chaste child, and as a tide of maternal recollections melted all her soul!

\* \* \* \* \*

The world rolled on. We frequently saw the young bride in the streets, and her cousin, who was our immediate neighbor, spoke of her prospects as cheering and happy. But one evening, just after sundown, and less than a year since we had seen each other at the wedding, he called, and with rather a grave aspect invited us to accompany him for a few minutes to the house of his aunt—the same house that had glittered with so much light, and re-echoed with so much laughter on the night of the Bridal. We proceeded along calmly, for although somewhat struck by the sedate aspect of our friend, it did not excite much surprise. On arriving at the house, the first objects that attracted attention were the closed and craped windows, and the awful silence that seemed to "breathe and sadden all

around." Our friend still refrained from speaking, but led on to the *Chamber of Death*! Our worst apprehensions were realized. The fair young creature, who less than a year before had stood before us radiant with loveliness and hope, was now still, pale, and cold in the icy embrace of death. Her last agonies were dreadful, but the sweet, soft smile, that told of a gentle heart, still lingered on her features. Her infant survived,—but the sudden decease

of that cherished one shed a gloom over that home and its happy household, which is not yet totally dispelled. The windows of the dwelling are still bowed, and the afflicted mother, although a sincere Christian, and anxious to yield in a Christian spirit to the decrees of Divine Providence, frequently finds herself melting in tears, and her whole soul convulsed with grief at the memory of her dear *Clara*.

*And such are human hopes and expectations!*

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## THE BROTHER AND SISTER.

BY MRS. EMMA C. EMBURY.

In the days of my early childhood, the little village of —, separated by green hills and broad fields from the busy city, formed one of the pleasantest summer resorts of the wealthy inhabitants of New York. Many a stately villa was reared upon the banks of the Hudson, many a neat country-house sheltered itself within the winding lanes which traversed the village, for its vicinity to the great mart offered irresistible temptations to those whose hands were chained to the galley of commerce, while their hearts were still wedded to nature. One of the fairest pictures in the "chambers of mine imagery" is that of a large old-fashioned mansion, seated in the midst of a garden "too trim for nature, and too rude for art," where a long avenue of cherry trees threw a pleasant shade across the lawn, while a rude swing, suspended between two of these sturdy old denizens of the soil, afforded a cool and delightful lounge to the studious and imaginative child. My earliest days were passed in that pleasant home, and my earliest lessons of wisdom learned in the school of that pretty village; therefore it is that my thoughts love to linger around those scenes, and therefore it is that I have fancied others might find something of interest in one of my reminiscences.

My shortest road to school led through a narrow green lane, rarely traversed by the gay vehicles which dashed along the main avenues of the village, and I was delighted to find such a quiet and shady path, where the turf was always so soft, and the air so fragrant with the breath of flowers. But I was soon induced to take a wide circuit rather than pass the solitary cottage which stood within that secluded lane. It was a low one-story building, with a broad projecting roof, throwing the narrow windows far into shade; and, as if to add to its sombre appearance, some former occupant had painted the house a dull lead color, which, by the frequent washings of the rain, and powderings of waytide dust, had assumed the grayish tint that gave to the cottage its distinctive appellation. Every village has its haunted house, and an evil name had early fallen on the "gray cottage." Behind it, and so near that three paces from the little porch would lead a person to its very brink, was a deep and rocky ravine, forming a basin for the waters of a rapid brook, which, after flowing in sunshine and music through half the village, fell with sullen plash into the gloom of this wild dell. Some dark and half forgotten tale of

guilt had added the horrors of superstition to the natural melancholy of the place, and few of the humbler inhabitants of the neighborhood would have been willing to stand after sunset on the brink of the Robbers' Glen. It was said that the house, in former times, had been the abode of wicked and desperate men. The earth of the cellar beneath it was heaved up with hillocks like graves, and supernatural sounds had been heard to issue from these mysterious mounds. For many years it had stood untenanted, and the boys of the village often amused themselves by pelting it, at a cautious distance, with stones.

But a "haunted house" had great attractions for the mind of one who revelled in fancies of the wild and wonderful. I was exceedingly anxious to behold the interior of the lonely cottage, which had now become invested with so much dignity in my eyes, and finding a few companions of like spirit, we determined to visit it. We accordingly fixed upon a certain Saturday afternoon, and determined to find some means of ingress into the barred and bolted cottage. A gay and light-hearted troop were we, as we scrambled over rail fences, gathered our aprons full of wild flowers, or chased the bright butterflies which mocked our glad pursuit. But as we entered the lane our merry shouts of laughter ceased, each looked earnestly in the face of the other, as if, for the first time, sensible of the mysterious importance of our undertaking, and, but for shame, several would have retraced their steps. I believe not one of us was insensible to the gloom which seemed suddenly to fall upon us, and as we looked towards the cottage, standing in the deep shadow of a spreading elm, while all else within the lane was glistening in the slant beams of the declining sun, we almost feared to approach the darkened spot. Cautiously advancing, however, and peeping through the rusted keyhole, we found our curiosity entirely baffled by the total darkness of the interior. It was proposed that we should climb the fence and attempt an entrance from the rear of the building, where we should be less likely to be interrupted or discovered by wayfarers, and after a brief consultation, held in hurried whispers, we resolved upon the daring feat. Silently treading the margin of the Robbers' Glen, we reached the back porch of the little cottage, and beheld one of the window shutters open. We looked into the apartment but saw nothing save the naked walls of the dilapidated room, and as one of our party

turned the latch of the door, to our great astonishment, it yielded to the touch and allowed us free entrance. Half frightened at our own success, we stood huddled together in the narrow passage, hesitating to advance, when suddenly a tall woman, clad in the deepest black, and displaying a countenance as white and (as it seemed to our excited fancies) as ghastly and rigid as a sheeted corpse, stood in the midst of us. How we ever got out of the house I cannot tell. I remember our desperate speed, the wild and headlong haste with which we threw ourselves over the low fence, and the total exhaustion we felt when once fairly escaped from that frightful place. As we lay on the grass, to rest before returning home, each one told her own story of that terrible apparition. None had heard a footstep when that fearful woman came among us; none had seen her approach, and though the sound of our own buzzing voices, and the fixed attention with which we were just then regarding the door of the apartment, which we wished yet dreaded to enter, might easily account for both these circumstances, yet we all came to the conclusion that we had seen a ghost, or, at the least, a witch.

On the following Sunday we were scarcely less alarmed, for, just as the services were commencing, the same tall figure, arrayed in deep mourning and veiled to her very feet, slowly proceeded up the aisle and took her seat on the step of the altar. My blood ran cold as I looked upon her, and when I afterwards heard that she had recently become the occupant of the gray cottage, my dread of her supernatural powers gave place to a belief that she was in some way or other mysteriously connected with the guilty deeds of which that cottage had been the scene. I did not trouble myself to remember that the events which had flung such horror around the Robbers' Glen must have occurred at least half a century previous, and therefore could have little to do with a woman yet in the prime of life. The curiosity which her presence excited was not confined to the children of the village. Her tall stature, her sombre garb, her veiled face, and her singular choice of a place of abode excited the conjectures of many an older and wiser head. But whatever interest her appearance had awakened, it was not destined to be satisfied. Those who, led by curiosity or real kindness, sought to visit her, were repulsed from the threshold; no one was allowed to enter her house; all prying inquiries were silenced, either by stern reserve or bitter vituperations; even the village pastor was refused admittance to her solitude; and, after months and even years, as little was known of her as on the day she first appeared. She lived entirely alone; once in each week she was seen walking towards the city, and on Sunday she was regularly to be found at the foot of the pulpit—but beyond this nothing was to be discovered. Few, very few, had ever distinctly seen the face whose paleness gleamed out from the folds of her thick veil, and, after some time, the people found other objects of interest, while the children carefully avoided all approach to the haunted cottage, and could scarcely repress a shudder of horror as

they heard the low rustle of her dusky garments on each returning Sunday.

Years passed on; circumstances occurred to remove me from the village, and the various changes which the heart experiences between the period of joyous childhood and earnest womanhood, had almost effaced from my mind all recollection of the "black witch," when I was unexpectedly and rather strangely made acquainted with her true history. It was a tale of ordinary trials and sorrows, such as might have befallen many others, and yet there are peculiarities in the sufferings of every individual as strongly marked as are the traits of character. There was no supernatural interest in her story, but it invested her in my mind with the dignity of unmerited sorrow, and it enables me to open for your perusal, gentle reader, another of the many strange written pages of human nature.

For more than twelve years Madeline Graham had been an only child, the darling of her invalid mother, and the pride of her doting father, when the birth of a brother opened a new channel for the affections of all the family. During the earliest period of his infancy the child seemed feebly struggling for existence, but he gradually acquired strength to resist the frequent attacks of disease, and though he gave no promise of robust health, his constitution seemed sufficiently invigorated to warrant a hope of prolonged life. The most unwearied exertions, however, were necessary, and his guidance over the very threshold of being was a task of more difficulty than the lifelong care of a hardy and healthy child. Yet the anxiety which his precarious state awakened, and the constant attention which he required, seemed to endear him the more closely to the little family. He became their idol, the object of their incessant solicitude, and comfort, happiness, even life itself was sacrificed to his welfare. Ere he had attained his third year, Mrs. Graham, who had long been in declining health, sank beneath the fatigue and anxiety she had endured, while, with her dying breath, she enjoined upon Madeline the most devoted attention to her darling boy. Madeline scarcely needed such admonition, for, from his very birth, her brother had been the object of her passionate love; but such a charge, given at such a solemn moment, sank deep into the heart of the young and sensitive girl. Falling on her knees beside her mother, she uttered a solemn vow that no earthly affection and no other duty should ever induce her to place her brother's interests secondary to her own. A smile of grateful tenderness lit up the face of the dying woman, and her last glance thanked Madeline for the self-sacrifice to which she had thus unconsciously pledged herself.

From that hour the young Alfred became his sister's especial charge. Young as she was, her father knew that he could trust her latent strength of character, and when she took her brother, even as a child, to her bosom, he felt assured that his boy would never need a mother's care.

Madeline Graham was no common character. Though she had scarcely counted her fifteenth

summer, she had grown up tall and stately, with a face almost severe in its fixed and classical beauty, while her manners, calm almost to coldness, were scarcely such as are usually found connected with youthful feeling and girlish simplicity. Educated solely by her parents, Madeline had acquired some of the characteristic traits of both. To her mother's morbid sensibility and enthusiasm she united her father's reserve and fixedness of purpose. She possessed strong passions, but an innate power of repressing them seemed born with them. Her love for truth was unbounded; even the common courtesies of society seemed to her but as so many fetters on the limbs of the goddess of her idolatry, and, therefore, even in her girlhood, her manners had become characterized by a sincerity almost amounting to *brusquerie*. Her talents were of the highest order, and her habits of reflection, which were singularly developed in one so young, enabled her to reap a rich harvest of knowledge from her father's careful culture. She was one to be admired, and praised, and wondered at, but she was scarcely calculated to awaken affection. The spontaneous gush of feeling, the guileless frankness of a heart that knows no evil and dreads no danger, the warm sympathy of a youthful nature, the sweet susceptibility which, though dangerous to its possessor, is yet so winning a trait of girlish character—all these attributes, which seem to belong to the spring-time of life, even as the buds and blossoms are inseparably connected with the renewed youth of the visible creation, were wanting to Madeline.

But it was from the religious opinions of her parents that the deepest tint of coloring was imparted to the mind of Madeline. Mrs. Graham, a lineal descendant of one of the sternest and most intolerant of the puritans, had early united herself to one of the strictest of strict sects, and had been accustomed to practise a system of self-denial as rigid, if not quite as visible, as the penances of cloistered austerity. The impulses of innocent gaiety, the promptings of harmless vanity, the wanderings of youthful fancy were regarded by her only as evidences of a sinful nature, which ought to awaken remorse as keen as that which visits the penitent bosom of deep-dyed guilt. In the enthusiasm of her early zeal she seemed lifted above the weaknesses of humanity, and even the gray-headed members of the Christian community looked upon her as a chosen servant of the truth. But her excitement had been too great; the hour of reaction came, and it was when lukewarmness and weariness had taken full possession of her feelings for a season, that she first met with her future husband. Ever in extremes, an earthly passion now absorbed the heart which had consumed its energies in zeal without knowledge, and she married Mr. Graham without allowing herself to look upon the broad line of separation which lay between them. Had she ever made religion a question she would have learned the fact; for if good taste forbade him to obtrude his opinions upon others, yet love of truth prevented him from seeking to conceal them. Mr. Graham was a skeptic. The great truths of revealed

religion were to him but as fables to amuse the multitude; and while in the works of creation he recognised the hand of a Deity, he read not in the hearts of men the necessity of a Redeemer. Mrs. Graham was horror-stricken when she discovered that her husband was not a Christian, and in proportion as the ardor of youthful passion faded into the tender light of conjugal affection, the terrible abyss which yawned between them became more painfully visible to her sight. The attempt to change his opinions again awakened her slumbering zeal, and with all the penitence of one who was conscious of having fallen from a state of elevated piety, she endeavored to make amends for her temporary alienation by renewed devotion. But her system of ascetic severity was little calculated to make religion attractive to her husband. The "beauty of holiness" was hidden beneath the sackcloth and ashes with which her mistaken judgment endued it, and Mr. Graham learned to look upon her piety as the *one defect*, rather than the *crowning grace*, in his wife's character. Her sincere affection, and a desire to preserve domestic harmony, at length compelled her to give up all attempts to change her husband's opinions, and she was therefore doomed to cherish a secret sorrow which wasted her very life away. The ascetic devotion which seemed so unlovely to the husband, produced a very different effect upon the imagination of Madeline. Accustomed to regard her mother as the best of human beings, she early learned to reverence and imitate her fervent zeal. Her reserve of character induced her to conceal her impressions even from the mother who labored to deepen them, and no one suspected the severe self-discipline which, even in childhood, she practised in imitation of her parent's example. Her father, who, while despising Christianity, yet paid it the involuntary homage of considering it a very proper safeguard for women and children, did not attempt to interfere in her religious education. He contented himself with cultivating the field of mind, and left her mother to sow her moral nature with the tares of prejudice along with the seed of true piety.

Madeline had scarcely attained her twentieth year when a sudden and violent illness deprived her of her father, and left her the sole guardian of her young brother. Upon looking into Mr. Graham's affairs, it was found that his profession had only procured for him a comfortable subsistence, and, as his income died with him, the orphans were almost penniless. The small house which they had long occupied, together with its furniture and a library of some value, were all that remained. To convert these into money was Madeline's first care, and her next step was to invest the amount thus obtained in the name of her brother, as a fund for his education and future subsistence. For herself she seemed to have no anxieties, and with a degree of disinterestedness, as rare as it was praiseworthy, she determined to derive her own maintenance from the labor of her hands. With characteristic energy she made all her arrangements without consulting any one, or asking the advice of her father's best friends. The bold

self-reliance which formed her most striking and least amiable trait was now fully developed, and she felt no need of other aid than that of her own strong mind. She had a deep design to work out in future—a darling scheme to mature—a hope, which in her stern nature assumed the form of a determination to compass, and all sacrifices seemed light which could aid her to a successful issue. Need I add, that her brother was the object of all her future aspirations.

Alfred Graham had already given evidence of precocious genius which seemed fully to justify Madeline's ambition. Nature in his case had displayed her usual compensating kindness, and since she had bestowed on him a dwarfed and diminutive form, a delicate and fragile body, made amends by giving him a countenance of almost feminine beauty, and a mind filled with the most exquisite perceptions. He was born a poet. His fervid feelings, his nervous temperament, his delicate sense of beauty in the moral and physical world—even the very fragility of constitution which shut him out from the rude conflicts of real life, and confined him within the limits of the fairyland of reverie—all seemed to point out his future vocation. Too young to frame in numbers the fancies of his childish hours, he yet breathed into his sister's ear the eloquent words of pure and passionless enthusiasm, and Madeline's heart thrilled with high hopes of his future glory. But she did not suffer nature to direct his course. Long ere the child had seriously commenced the work of education, she had destined him to become an apostle of Christianity to the benighted world of paganism. Imaginative, high minded, stern, and self-sacrificing, Madeline was just such a woman as in the olden time might have embroidered the cross upon the mantle of her best beloved one, and sent him forth to fight the battles of the holy church. But the missionary of modern days has a far more difficult and therefore far nobler office to perform. Amid belted knights and men-at-arms to do battle with myriads of the Paynim foe is a lighter task than that which falls upon him, who goes forth alone and single handed to face the more insidious foes of ignorance and sin amid the blinded and perverse heathen. Yet such was the high and holy duty to which Madeline destined her brother, while her own ambition was limited to the hope of being the companion of his toils and his labors. She looked forward to the time when they should go forth hand in hand into the howling wilderness of superstition, with the gospel as a light to their feet and a lamp to their path, while they scattered the blessings of truth among the benighted idolaters of distant lands.

As Alfred advanced in life he learned the full extent of his sister's sacrifices for his welfare. He saw her relinquishing all the intellectual pleasures she had once enjoyed, and devoting herself day and night to the humble labors of the needle. He noticed her attention to his most trifling wishes, and he did not fail to observe that while his dress was of the neatest and finest texture, and his food of the delicate kind which best suited the capricious appetite of an invalid, Madeline practised the strictest economy in

all that affected only her own individual comfort. Yet Alfred did not love Madeline with the entire affection which could alone repay her devotedness. There was too much awe, too much fear blended with his feelings towards her. Her strong mind and stern integrity seemed ever ready to rebuke the vacillating temper and morbid sensibility of the youth. Superior to temptations which had no power over herself, she had little charity for the failings of another; and the boyish errors, often but the earliest trial of principles which the world will hereafter put to a far more severe test—were regarded by her as heavy sins. Educated in the seclusion of home, she could not imagine the dangers which beset a boy from his first entrance into the miniature world of a large school. Instead of rewarding with her approbation the first struggles of principle with passion in the youthful heart, she seemed only shocked and mortified that any conflict should have been necessary, and was more keenly sensible to the weakness which had required defence, than to the strength which had offered resistance. Such mistaken views of character soon checked the flow of confidence between them. Alfred could not open his whole heart to one who was incapable of comprehending all his feelings, and though he never needed a mother's care, he early learned the want of a mother's sympathy.

Madeline had seen sufficient proofs of Alfred's facile temper and instability of purpose to dread his introduction into scenes of greater temptation, and, vainly fancying that he would be safer any where than in the busy city, she preferred that he should enter a distant college. At the age of seventeen he was removed from his sister's influence to enter upon his new course of studies, and although at first truly unhappy at this separation from his only relative, it was not long before the absence of her keen eye and stern rebuke became a positive relief to him. Hitherto his life had passed amid the sombre shades of domestic life, and with all Madeline's noble traits of character, she lacked the tact, so truly feminine, which enables a woman to throw sunshine around the humblest home. The cheerful song, the pleasant jest, the merry voice, the bright smile, the buoyant step—all the lighter graces without which a woman's character, however elevated and noble, is but as a Corinthian column without its capital, or as a rose without its perfume—were wanting to the unbending nature of Madeline. The world was to her a scene of probation and preparation, and to waste a thought upon enlivening its grave duties seemed to her as idle as planting flowers around a sepulchre. When therefore Alfred found himself amid a throng of young men from every part of the country—some ambitious of renown, some fond of study for its own sake, some utterly careless of present duties, some slothful and indifferent to honor, but all equally alive to pleasurable excitement and equally eager in the pursuit of amusement, he felt as if he had suddenly been transported to a world of which he had never dreamed. His susceptible temper rendered him an easy prey to

the lures of gay society. Intellectual enjoyments mingled their pure odors with the fumes of the wine cup, and the refinements of elegant taste served to veil the native deformity of vice, until, long before he had learned the danger of his position, he was bound in the strong toils of sensual indulgence. Full of intellect, and wonderfully acute in his perceptions, he soon became distinguished for his genius, and the heart of his sister was often gladdened by tidings of his success. But she knew not that he was drinking from more turbid waters than those which flow from the fountain of wisdom—she dreamed not that the offering which she hoped to bring pure and unpolluted to the altar of Heaven was already blemished and unworthy to be presented.

Alfred Graham was not designed by nature to be a votary of evil. Temptation had found him weak to resist, but conscience was still true to her charge, and the youth was as free from habitual vice as he was destitute of unsullied virtue. When the vacations brought him to his quiet home, the better feelings of his nature were ever aroused; he respected the virtue of his sister's character, and when surrounded by that pure atmosphere which envelopes real goodness, he forgot even to harbor a sinful thought. But day by day the profession to which he was destined became more repugnant to his feelings, and after deferring as long as possible the announcement of his wishes, he at length summoned courage to reveal the truth to his sister. The blow fell upon Madeline with almost stunning violence. He had just left college crowned with honors and flushed with success, and Madeline was exulting in the hope of his future usefulness, when he revealed to her his change of purpose. The first intimation of his unwillingness to devote himself to the church, almost drove her to frenzy. All the violence of her secret nature broke forth in the fearful threats of temporal and eternal punishment which she predicted for such apostacy, and Alfred's feeble temper was actually crushed beneath the weight of her indignation. He trembled at the storm which he had raised, and when, after days of entreaty and expostulation, Madeline, the stern, proud Madeline, even knelt at his feet, and implored the child of her affections to listen to the voice of God, speaking by the lips of her who had ever been as a mother to his heart, the weak youth yielded to her prayers and promised what he well knew he could not conscientiously perform. His was not the free-will offering of talents and time and health and strength in the service of the Redeemer. He entered the sanctuary as one driven onward by irresistible force, not as one drawn by the cords of love and piety.

Time passed on and taught Alfred a lesson of deep hypocrisy. His timid and feeble nature could neither resist the influence of evil nor brave its consequences, and therefore it was that the fair face of the youth became more and more characterized by sanctity in proportion as his heart became less susceptible of its influences. Happy is it for mankind that the eye rarely pierces beneath the veil which conceals the hideous depravity of the heart. Who

but would have shrunk from the delicate beauty of Alfred's gentle countenance—who but would have shuddered at the contemplation of those clear blue eyes, that feminine complexion, the delicate rose tint of his thin cheek, and the exceeding loveliness of his chiselled and flexible lips, if the dark mass of evil thoughts which lay beneath that fair seeming, could have been discerned. Yet Alfred was far from being happy. Unstable as water, he had no power over his own impulses, and remorse preyed upon him, even while he sought to drown his senses in indulgence. Conscience was his perpetual tormentor, and yet a constant course of sinning and repenting left him neither time nor will to struggle effectually with his errors.

But a still darker change came upon his character. His health, which had several times required a suspension of his studies, began again to fail, a short time before the period fixed upon for his ordination, and he eagerly seized the opportunity of deferring the dreaded ordeal. The physicians ordered perfect relaxation from all mental labors, and unfortunately for his future peace, the listlessness of unwonted idleness led him to examine a chest of old papers, the accumulated records of many years, where he accidentally met with a catalogue of his father's library. Alfred was so young at the time of his father's death that he retained little recollection of him, and Madeline had carefully kept him in ignorance of those skeptical opinions which had so grieved both mother and daughter. It was with no little surprise, therefore, that Alfred found the names of so great a number of infidel works among his father's books. He pondered long upon the subject, and at length conjectured the truth. This excited his interest, and a vague curiosity, awakened rather by a belief in his sister's desire to conceal from him his father's opinions, led him secretly to procure the prohibited volumes. Upon the feeble mind of one who was "blown about by every wind of doctrine," and who yearned after wordly pleasures while he shrunk with unutterable disgust from religious duties, the subtleties of the skeptics had a most fatal effect. He had never been well grounded in the faith, and the doubts now suggested to his mind were exactly such things as in his present state of feeling he would gladly have adopted as truths. These six months of respite from the theological studies were spent in the careful perusal of all skeptical writings, and when Alfred resumed his former pursuits the plague spot of infidelity had already given evidence of the fatal disease which was spreading over his moral nature.

If my tale were designed only for the eye of the student of human nature, I might dwell long upon the strange incongruity of feeling and action, the wonderful contrariety between principle and practice, and all the complicated workings of a wayward heart, which characterized the deceptive course of the young student. With his usual timid hypocrisy he concealed every real feeling, every genuine impulse. His conduct was apparently irreproachable, his principles seemed unimpeachable, and he even schooled himself to come forward and enrol himself

beneath the banner of the cross, when he was but too conscious that he had already trampled the holy emblem beneath his feet. Why did he carry his deceit to such an awful extent? Alas! who can tell just where the waves of sin may stay their whelming force? He feared the world's dread laugh at his apostacy, he shrunk from the scorn of all good men, and, above all, his mind absolutely cowered at the thought of his sister's bitter wrath. So he buried his secret within his own bosom, and trusting to some future chance to rescue him from the irksome duties of his profession, prepared himself for the ceremony of ordination. But he was not yet sensible of the terrible power of Conscience.

The day came, and, as usual, crowds were assembled to witness the dedication of the youthful candidates. The two young men—for Alfred had a companion, a pious, humble-minded, meek-hearted youth—stood before the altar to offer their vows. Madeline, the weeping but happy Madeline—who had sacrificed her youth and health and beauty, aye and the hopes ever dearest to a woman's heart, to this one darling hope—was there too, and as she looked on her brother bending before the altar, while his bright curls just caught one straggling sunbeam which shed a glory around his youthful brow, she was heard to murmur "Lo, here am I, Lord, and the child which thou hast given me."

The services commenced—the prayers of the congregation had arisen to Heaven, the incense of praise had floated upward on the solemn melody of the organ, the exhortation to the candidates had been affectionately uttered by an aged pastor, and the moment came when the presentation of the two was made to the Bishop by the officiating clergyman. The solemn appeal was then uttered—

*"Brethren, if there be any of you who knoweth any impediment or any notable crime on either of these persons for the which he ought not to be admitted to the holy office, let him come forth in the name of God and show what the crime or impediment is."*

At these words a sudden terror seemed to seize upon Alfred Graham. His frame shook with suppressed emotion, his countenance became livid, and his fine features were strangely contorted as if some sudden pang had convulsed him. The next instant he uttered a faint cry and fell prostrate to the ground, while his very life-blood was poured at the foot of the altar which he had dared to touch with polluted hands.

He was borne to his home in utter insensibility. The sting of conscience had finished the work which disease had long since begun, and the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs had been the consequence of his unnatural excitement and self-command. All that medical skill could effect was tried, but without success, and ere the lapse of another day it was known that Alfred Graham was sinking into the arms of death. There was no time for repentance—no time to combat prejudices and awaken better impulses. He lay as if in the deep torpor of insensibility, until aroused by some cordial administered by

his physician, when his strength seemed to rally, and raising himself on his pillow, he addressed his sister in words which fell like molten lead upon her heart. With all the eloquence of passion he poured forth a wild confession of his errors and his doubts, and then, in language equally fervid but far more bitter, he reproached her—*her* who had devoted her whole life to his welfare—as the cause of all his guilt. He accused her of having crushed his timid spirit by sternness and unbending rigor—of having taught him hypocrisy by her fierce contempt for his weaknesses—of having killed him by forcing him to a profession which he hated and contemned.

"I am not mad, Madeline," he exclaimed, in a hoarse voice, broken by his difficult and long-drawn breath, "I am not mad, but so surely as I am now stretched upon the bed of death, so surely has your ambition and your mistaken zeal laid me here to die. I seek not to excuse myself, and may God forgive me my many secret sins; but never, never would my soul have been so deeply stained had it not been for your unrelenting indignation at my boyish follies, and your determined will in the choice of my future destiny. I forgive you, Madeline, but you will not forgive yourself."

The exertion of uttering these terrible words was too great, and ere the sounds yet died upon the ear of the horror-stricken sister, the spirit of the misguided youth had gone to its dread account.

From that hour Madeline was utterly and entirely changed. Whatever were her feelings she shared them with none, but shrunk alike from question and sympathy. Those dying reproaches, unjust as she felt them to be, were yet engraven in ineffable characters upon her heart, and with a feeling akin to the mistaken austerity which punishes the body for the sins of the soul, she resolved to make her future life a penance for her involuntary error. Lonely and desolate, she took up her abode in a place well suited to her embittered and almost misanthropic feelings. For more than ten years the gray cottage was her abode, and the labors of the seamstress furnished her scanty subsistence. During all that period not a creature was ever admitted beyond the threshold of her door, and all curiosity about her had quite subsided long before the termination of her lonely career. At length she was missed from her usual lowly seat in church. A second Sabbath came, and still the black and veiled form of the recluse was not seen. Common humanity demanded some inquiry into her fate, and after several vain attempts to procure admission into the cottage, the door was forced. Upon a truss of straw, in one corner of the desolate chamber, lay the emaciated form of the unfortunate Madeline, stiff, and cold, and ghastly, as if days had passed since the spirit had escaped from its clay tenement. She died as she had lived, lonely, and unknown, for it was not until years had elapsed that I heard the story of the brother and the sister from the lips of one who had known them in early days; while other incidental circumstances enabled me to identify Madeline Graham with the tall "*weird woman*" who had so terrified my childish fancy.

The erring brother sleeps beneath the shadow of the sanctuary, in ground still consecrated by holy usage, but all trace of the hapless sister has vanished from the earth. The village graveyard is now a populous highway, bordered by tall houses and traversed by busy feet, while the green hillock which once marked the burial place of Madeline Graham has long since been crushed beneath the weight of

pavements, echoing to the noisy tread of many a thoughtless wayfarer.

Alas, for human love ! and, alas, for human error ! How dreary and desolate would seem many a scene of unmerited suffering did we not know that there is a brighter world, where all tears shall be wiped from all eyes, and where there shall be no sorrow nor sighing through an eternity of happiness !

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## THE BUD AND BLOSSOM.

### A REASON FOR BACHELORISM.

BY MRS. SEBA SMITH.

"You have told me, Mr. Hunter, at least a dozen times, you would reveal to me the secret of your bachelorism; now we have no visitors, and no prospect of any; the quiet patter of the rain has tempted you to cigar and slippers; and that dim burning of the coal in the grate, the drowsy fire of June, just enough to dispel the damp, and not enough to rouse one uneasy nerve, is of itself a pledge for a long, tranquil evening. And yet—by no means, my dear sir, do n't toss aside your cigar, and as to sighing, it is out of the question—you are too stout for sentiment, have a well-to-do air, a sort of tell-tale good-dinner aspect, that do n't accord well with the sentimental."

Mr. Hunter drew from his bosom a small miniature, the portraits of two sisters, the one a girl of seventeen, the other a child of seven or eight—a bud and a blossom of female loveliness. Even I forgot the well-to-do air, and found myself unconsciously sympathizing as his smooth, unmarked face settled into an expression of melancholy. To be sure it was unnatural, and, just as it was about to reassume its habitual look of easy content, and the cigar was quietly restored to the lips, he caught a glimpse of my eyes, and they *might* have looked mischievous, for he flung the cigar aside, and declared he would never, no never, satisfy my curiosity. "Women were all alike heartless, untruthful, and full of whim. A man never knew where to find them—one thing to-day, another to-morrow. A book that is all preface—the reader never gets beyond the first page. No wonder married men are lean and cadaverous. That same lean Cassius must have been a married man. Othello's occupation was done when he became a married man. Witness the

spleen of Iago—it is that of a married man. Macbeth was a married murderer—it makes me desperate—"

"Yes, desperate to be married. I won't enter into a defence, because, my dear sir, I do so much want that same story. I forgive this little ebullition of bachelor spleen, believing it may be of service to you. But, Mr. Hunter, here is the secret of all the bachelorism in the world—Inconstancy—remember the old ballad that saith,

'Sigh no more, ladye, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever—  
One foot on sea and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never.'

"Now do tell me the story of these pretty girls, and I promise not to annoy you."

Mr. Hunter was too good-natured to refuse—bachelors *are* good natured.

"This is a painting from a sketch I made of the two girls, shortly before we embarked upon that fatal voyage. They were standing as you now see; Ellen with the same tranquil, gentle demeanor, and the roguish Anne in this very attitude indeed, but a thousand changeful meanings flitting over her face.

"I was but twenty-two—full of life, health, and the enthusiasm of early manhood. Ellen was the realization of my dreams, the one pure and blessed being forever floating about the fancies of the imagination, the impersonation of my ideal of womanhood at that time; meek, trusting, dependent, and loving with a singleness and purity of soul that sanctified every emotion. I need not say that the most restless dream of ambition, the most alluring incitements to pleasure, were as nothing to me when weighed by the wealth of her guileless tones of

affection, the earnest and touching accents of tenderness that fell from her sweet lips.

"I was about to return to one of our southern cities, there to prosecute my profession, and Mrs. Lacey, a widow of some fortune, and long an invalid, determined to arrange her affairs and remove thither also, in company with her two daughters, my sweet Ellen and Anne.

"The first evening of our voyage Ellen joined me for a promenade on the deck, and as she confidently put her arm within mine, I shall never forget the renewed sense of manhood I experienced at that moment, nor the exquisite delight arising from a consciousness that a creature of such grace and tenderness relied on me, and me only, for protection. Believe me, too, a woman can realize but once, I mean only in the one individual who engrosses her whole heart, that sweet sense of dependence, that delight in appealing to the manliness of a being, to whom alone she is not ashamed to confess her weakness.

"You smile, but we bachelors know more of your woman hearts than you do yourselves. For instance, you admire strength, because you are physically inferior. You admire intellect, because however intellectual you may be, you delight still more in the affections. Beauty is nothing to you, but self-sustaining manliness is every thing. You admire nobleness and generosity of sentiment, because they are not your own characteristics—courage because you are cowards—"

"Oh! Mr. Hunter, Mr. Hunter, I *do* protest—"

"Yet hear me through. Love with a woman must be commingled with reverence. She cannot love deeply, fervently; she cannot feel that the whole of her own exhaustless and beautiful sympathies are welling up to the light, like a pure fountain gushing up to the sunshine, only as love has become an idolatry, a holiness, a religion; and wo unto her when such is its nature! Earth has set its seal against it; the very stars look down sadly upon it; every where an altar arises to the living God, on which the incense that may not, cannot find a worthy censor here, is transferred to that of the Eternal. Thus it is that women are more religious than men—and thus it is that one of the most gifted of their number has said,

"Oh, hope not, ask thou not too much  
Of sympathy below—  
Few are the hearts, whence one same touch  
Bids the sweet waters flow—  
Few, and by still conflicting powers  
Forbidden here to meet—  
Such ties would make this world of ours  
Too fair for aught so fleet."

"But to my story. We had been out three or four days, with favorable winds, and the sea and sky had revealed to us each day their varied aspect of beauty. A change had been threatening through the day, and as the night approached the dense settling of the vapors seemed to hem us in, and that strange utterance of the elements, where they call from point to point, holding as they do undivided empire over the world of waters, was sublime, not to say appalling.

Mrs. Lacey was a timid woman, and though the thread of life seemed every moment ready to sunder, she still clung to it with a wild tenacity. Ellen thought not of herself, and I believe she would have shrunk from witnessing the fearful uproar about us, as the vessel plunged onward, bravely onward, yet helpless even in her strength. I was leaning against the companion-way, alive to an almost painful sense of sublimity, when the light form of Anne rushed into my arms, and clasping hers about me she buried her face in my bosom.

"Oh! Charles, dear brother Charles, don't send me back—let me stay with you and I shall fear nothing."

"I gathered the sweet child to my bosom, and by a strange instinct approached the taffarel of the ship. I became aware of a sudden and terrible tumult—of a blackness even more dense than the thick clouds about us. Anne clung convulsively to my neck, and I instinctively put out my hands for support, for there was a fearful crash, a wild reeling beneath me, and I felt myself lifted from my feet and borne onward in the thick darkness. I was clinging to the chains of a larger ship that had crossed our track in that fearful storm, and had passed over her gallant souls, leaving all to perish, save us two so wondrously preserved.

"When afflictions come singly upon ourselves we are overpowered with a sense of desolation; we tread the wine-press alone, and the burden is often too much for human endurance; but when the calamity is general the individual is merged in the many, and the selfishness of grief is forgotten. I scarcely wept for the gentle and beautiful Ellen. I was conscious of a dull aching weight of bereavement; but then I felt as an atom, a quivering, vital one indeed, but yet only as an atom in the great mass of human suffering. The ocean, too, pure and deep, seemed a fit resting place for the good and lovely.

When Anne awoke to consciousness, she called frantically for her mother and sister. Slowly and gently I revealed the sad reality. She stood with her little hands clasped, her wet hair streaming over her shoulders, and those deep earnest eyes gazing into mine with an intensity that pained me to the very heart. When all had become clear to her, she dropped her hands slowly and the tears gathered into her eyes; then, as by a new impulse, she drew herself to my bosom, and nestled there, like a dove, weary and desolate.

"Tender and beautiful sufferer! she gathered her duty only from my eyes, and assented to the slightest intimation of my will. I was her only friend on the earth, and her gentle nature, now doubly gentle in her sorrow, lavished all its tenderness on me.

"Gradually she awoke from the listlessness induced by newness to suffering, and the wonderful elasticity of her character revealed a thousand glowing and impassioned traits, that had hitherto escaped my observation. Frank and courageous, she regarded things as they were in themselves, and not as they might appear to others. Challenging the

opinions of none, with an intuitive feminine tact, her conclusions were always what one would desire.

"Nature is, after all, the best teacher—would women but yield themselves to the promptings of a simple and womanly nature, they would be far more effective than they at present are. Our sex are worshippers of truth—you smile—but it is true nevertheless; and might you, dared you preserve your primitive truthfulness of heart, we should fall down and worship you.

"But I digress, and am describing Anne rather as she appeared when, like Spenser's Amoret, she 'reclined in the lap of womanhood,' than while she sat upon my knee, a tender and simple child.

"I would scarcely assert that Anne was endowed with genius; and yet I know not—at any rate it was thoroughly a woman's genius—earnest, truthful, affectionate, dependent, and yet nobly self-sustained—impassioned and yet never mistaking or perverting her emotions—embodying every quality of her sex, and yet elevating all—gay as a bird, simple as a child; her own bright nature investing all things with an ideal halo, and yet with a singular clearness of perception and soundness of judgment correcting all such illusions; a creature of contradictions, and yet grand in her consistency; a true woman; the life-study of a man, ay, and were he the wisest of his sex, he might never exhaust the sweet subject; just not an angel, but all a woman—

'A creature not too bright nor good,  
For human nature's daily food;  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.'

"The ship that had wrecked our own good barque was bound on a three years cruise, and all that time Anne was the only one of her sex on board. She never seemed to feel the peculiarity of her situation, all she said or did was feminine and becoming, and her little state room worthy of Goethe's Margery, 'it is not every maiden keeps her room so chary,' might have been said of her.

"Never shall I forget the wild delight with which she hailed our approach to land, nor the care with which she nurtured the plants that were to relieve the monotony of the voyage—the touching gratitude with which she received the gift of a bird or animal that was to be her especial pet. And then to mark her many little expedients to preserve the order and taste of her poor garments: true, nothing could be more picturesque than her half oriental costume, the loose trowsers and robe confined by a girdle that every sailor vied in keeping tasteful. Her dark, changeful eyes and luxuriant hair might well afford to meet a skin embrowned by exposure, but rich with the brightest hue of health. The sailors called her the little queen, from her proud air, and the officers applied a thousand aristocratic epithets, all indicating a playful reverence. She was a child in heart, but a woman in manner.

"I need not recount her studies, nor that pretty reserve that made her apply to me, and to me only, for aid. Alas! I knew not the poison I thus imbibed.

I dreamed not that that sweet child could ever be aught to me but a sister.

"At length, after an absence of four years, I placed the dear girl under the protection of my mother. I was an only child, and she received Anne as the gift of God, a new object of attachment.

"But why dwell upon these things? Why tell how the child ripened into womanhood—beautiful, most beautiful, not in feature merely, though even there few of her sex were her equals; but beautiful in thought, in voice, and motion—that combination of parts, that wondrous result of grace, even where shades may be defective yet producing an harmonious whole? Why tell how her confiding, sisterly attachment remained unshaken, while I learned to love her with all the fervor of manhood? I felt it was hopeless, and became an exile from home, that I might not inflict a pang upon her trusting heart. After a long absence, in which time, which had only softened, I fondly trusted had cured me of my passion, I returned to find Anne but more lovely and attaching, and now doubly lost to me. When she pressed her maidenly lips to my cheek, and again called me brother, I rebelled at the term and madly revealed the truth.

"Poor Anne! she recoiled from me trembling and in tears. At length she put her arms about my neck, and with the same gentle accent, the same confiding tenderness that I remembered upon that fearful night at sea, she uttered—

"'Dear, dear brother Charles, am I not your sister? You do love me, you will not cast me from you, though—though I have dared to love another.'

"I raised her head, and her calm eyes met mine, though her cheek and bosom were dyed with blushes.

"'Never, dear Anne, you shall be my sister; God help me to regard you as such only.'

"I kept my promise. Oh, God! did I not, through years of agony that tongue might never utter!

"Anne became the wife of another, and never, never, can I enough admire her refined womanly deportment. Her whole soul, with all its unutterable wealth of loving, was now his; and yet in my presence all was chastened to a tranquil content, as if she, truthful as she was, dreaded I should know her deep fount of feeling, lest it might enhance my own sense of solitude. 'Most excellent wretch,' Othello would have said; every where I traced the evidences of her benevolence, and every where was she mindful of my happiness.

"Holy and generous woman! the earnest, the true-hearted—earth was no place for thee. Enough, she died—died ere a shadow had fallen upon her bright nature—ere the thought had assumed shape that the creature of her idolatry had brought a desecrated gift to the altar."

How many of that class—deemed by the throng so cold and passionless—have for their solitary life some such cause as that which made my friend a bachelor! Surely there lives not man or woman who has not at some period loved; and thousands, like the heroes of fiction, make but one cast of the heart.

Original.

## THE CONTRAST.

You shall see some gay, elegant youth, as he passes the street, noting with a sort of wonder the cordial, earnest salutation of some young working man, as he meets his acquaintance, perhaps a market girl, or a laundress. May be she is not comely—may be positively awkward; and the young aristocrat says to himself, "Foh! that coarse featured dowdy! It is all put on, that warmth and heartiness! He can't care for her—he can't admire or love her!" and in fancy he compares with her the soft, fair, graceful, petted syren who for the time enslaves his own youthful spirit. "How opposite—how unlike!" he says; and unlike and opposite she is, indeed, both in person and in character.

We do not affect to say that goodness never consists with elegance and beauty. But as we know that adulation and the praises of the vain, as shadows, follow their possessor, so we do say, that it is not to be found here, nor half as easily retained as by one who, in the depressed scale of life, confined to duties, and necessitated to submission, finds humility and an obliging temper the best passports to her own ease and preferment; and, not stopping here, is not only amiable but *pious*. Such a one, none will dispute, does, in sterling worth, outweigh the gossamer affectations, the blandishments, and the fascinating beauty of our other portrait.

And now, ten years have elapsed since the youth first presented won the race from all his rivals, and, amidst their envy and his own exultation, became the husband of our adulated beauty. But the idea of sentiment—in the youthful vocabulary meaning *love* only—has had some better instruction of experience; and he confesses, with a sigh, that there may be more in woman than what enchants the fancy, or "fills the eye." And he were now disposed to look with less derision upon the humble youth, who, choosing not by the eye, but *the affections*, has not been deceived in the regards which his heart demanded; for he, too, has married his early acquaintance. And she has been a help-meet for him—she has encouraged, consoled, and assisted him, and he is getting cheerful and easy as he advances in life. Whilst the gayer youth, feeling ever vexed and hindered, is becoming sad by disappointment, and silent for want of sympathy. But since his *mistake* was of his own choosing, he makes himself up to the manliness of equanimity; but it is an *equanimity so stern* that you could hardly recognize him as the hilarious youth of our first presentation.

Our two pictures together may illustrate the position that a youth of hardship and labor, in blunting the sense to mere externals, has the effect to make early wise—in choosing. And, as in the partner, what, by the drudgery of life, may be lost in grace and elegance, in one of a true nature be more than compensated by the necessity of goodness. And whilst we would point out the weakness of a fastidious and false motive in the most important step in life, and of the irretrievable and bitter chagrin which it occasions—marking, also,

the comparative worthlessness of mere beauty, and affords occasion to show that in a marriage sought in trueness and earnestness of feeling, the parties, by a reciprocation of the common burdens of life, by dividing the cares and sharing the satisfactions, lessen the evils, and enhance the felicities of both.

MATILDA.

## THE CONVICT'S FATE.

### A SKETCH FROM FACT.

So before, behind, around thee like an armament of cloud,  
the black fate labors onward. HEMANS.

ON the —— day of March 18——, might have been seen, in the country town of L——, an unusual collection of people of every age, size, and sex. All the public houses were filled to overflowing, and still there were many strangers unable to obtain shelter, but the inhabitants of the village, with generous hospitality, threw open their doors, and made the comers welcome. The cause of this concourse is soon told. The day succeeding the one above mentioned, had been set apart to inflict the utmost punishment of the law on a criminal then lying in the prison. He was a man large in stature, and of powerful strength. He had a short time before, in a moment of passion, taken the life of one of his most intimate friends, a young man of promising talents, and universally respected by a large circle of relatives and friends. The criminal was arrested the day after the murder, tried, and sentenced to death; and that sentence was to be carried out upon the morrow.

The day appointed for the execution was one of the most delightful of the season. The sun rose with unusual splendor. But for one being that luminary had no bright rays—to him there was no joy—no contentment—no happy tranquil feelings swelling the heart with love and adoration. Desperate with the thoughts of an ignominious death, he lay upon the floor of his cell, overloaded with chains, revolving in his mind some bold attempt at an escape—escape when naught but death stared him in the face—escape, when the very hope seemed the madness of despair! How was this to be accomplished? He was to be removed from the prison-house to the place of execution, which was about a mile distant, guarded by a portion of the militia of the county, carrying arms charged with ball cartridge. The only chance for escape would be when he was being removed from the cart to the scaffold, as at that period there would be the least suspicion of his intention. The attempt was desperate, but it was resolved upon.

At length the criminal was brought forth, clothed in the customary dress, and placed in the cart upon the coffin intended to receive his lifeless remains. He was pale and dejected; but with none of his energies impaired by long confinement. His eye, that no suffering could dim, flashed with more than its wonted brilliancy. The prison was built upon an eminence, and upon the spot where he now stood he could look down upon the preparations for his death, and calculate his chances for escape. One piercing glance revealed every thing—that glance proved sufficient.

The procession moved slowly on. The bell, suspended

in the cupola of the prison-house, tolled forth in single and dolorous notes, announcing the awful tidings of death: the crowd in front of the scaffold was immense, but behind, scarcely any persons were collected, in consequence of the ground being damp and marshy, and not affording as fine a view of the approaching spectacle as that in front, which, being slightly elevated, gave those farther off as good an opportunity of viewing the scene as those immediately under the scaffold.

As the sheriff motioned him out of the cart, the prisoner, apparently down cast and dejected, slowly rose and ascended the scaffold, but it was only a moment before he had sprung into the midst of the armed force below, and with the strength of a giant opposed every endeavor to stop his progress. Life was before him—death was behind. He well knew that if retaken he would be shown no mercy, and it were as well to meet his death from the hands of those around him, as from the instrument of the law. With a tremendous effort he cleared the soldiery. Immediately a dozen muskets poured forth their murderous contents at his person, but he passed the ordeal harmless. Struck with astonishment at the suddenness of the effort, the populace remained for a moment inactive, and then with a loud shout started in pursuit; but that moment of indecision gave the prisoner the advantage. Nothing could now stop his progress. Once only, a man in advance of the rest, threw himself in the path before the criminal; but with an herculean grasp the liberated convict seized and crushed him to the earth. On, on, he sped. Mile after mile, hill after hill was passed, but still his pursuers were close behind. Oh! what hopes passed through that wretched being's mind, as with the swiftness of the deer, he fled for life. What resolutions of reform!—what deeds of virtue to be done presented themselves to his imagination! It was a glorious thing to defraud death, to leap from the grave at the moment he felt himself sinking in. But what sight is that which meets his eye? Directly in front of him he perceives a vast body of fire glowing and burning immediately in his path. The sight causes his energies to slacken—he drops nearly exhausted—his pursuers approach nearer. He hears their shouts, and once more he springs forward. He draws nearer to that vast body of fire, but, as he approaches, how changed the aspect before him. Joy! joy! instead of fire, he now perceives the broad and majestic river, rolling on her downward course, her placid bosom reflecting the beams of the noonday sun, until the whole surface glowed like burnished silver.

In a moment he was on the bank. Invigorated and cheered by newly-born hopes, his eye ranged the shore in every direction, but not a boat was to be seen. His pursuers were close behind him. But at length he detected a small skiff that was anchored about twenty yards from the shore, and which his anxiety had caused

him at first to overlook. Without hesitation he plunged into the stream, and had scarcely reached the boat before his pursuers were on the bank. But he was safe from them. Fortunately for him there was a solitary paddle in the bottom of the boat, and, hastily slipping the rope over the stake to which it was secured, he darted out into the stream. In vain those congregated upon the shore searched for another boat in which to continue the pursuit, not one was to be found. Maddened with rage at being baffled, at the moment they thought escape was impossible, some sprang into the water to endeavor to reach the convict by swimming; but it was useless. They could not overtake their intended victim. Stopping for one moment, he stood upright in his frail bark, and gave a loud laugh of defiance: then resuming his seat, he directed his course to the opposite shore. All fear had now fled. Once within the lines of the British possessions in Canada, it would be no difficult matter to secrete himself until a favorable opportunity presented itself for departing to the old world. But those shores he was destined never to reach. A more terrible death than that from which he had escaped awaited him.

The part of the river at which the prisoner attempted to cross was one that, unless superior skill was manifested, rendered the boatman liable to extreme danger. It was but a very short distance from the rapids that are generally considered the commencement of the falls of Niagara. At all seasons there is a very strong current leading to this point; but at this time the force of the current was considerably augmented, on account of a heavy freshet that had swollen the river to an unusual degree, thereby causing a greater body of water to rush toward the falls. The convict, whose mind was occupied with other thoughts, was not aware of this circumstance until he found himself gradually drawing closer to the terrible descent. At length, however, his eyes were opened to the extent of his danger. He at once perceived that there was no time for deliberation, and using every effort in his power, he applied his oar. For a moment the boat stood still, and then slowly moved up the stream; but before it had proceeded many yards the paddle that he held in his hand, unable to resist such an unusual pressure, snapped asunder close to the handle. The blade shot far, far from his reach, and beyond all possibility of recovery.

What his emotions at this juncture? In a moment all the scenes of his past life rushed through his mind, the few good deeds vanishing like the morning mist before the many evil ones that now rose up before him in accusation. But one struck more terror into his soul than all the rest. It was the murder of his late victim. He fancied he beheld the sufferer, pale and bloody, rising before him. His flesh crept, his eyes rolled horribly, his powerful frame quaked and trembled. Nothing could drive that sight away. In vain he covered his face

with his hands—in vain he cast himself in the bottom of the boat and grovelled like a worm—that ghastly form was still before him.

On, on rolled the stream, and with it the bark that was carrying the murderer to destruction. It was now within a few yards of the rapids. He perceived the imminent danger of his situation without the power of avoiding it. His shrieks for aid were heard on either shore, and struck terror to every heart. Cold drops of agony collected upon his forehead, and chased each other down his pale cheeks. “Oh, God!” he cried, “if succor could arrive, how willingly would I yield up life upon the scaffold.” Once more his energies appeared to revive. He sprang up in the boat, and, with a mad-dened effort, seized and tore the only seat from its place, and used every endeavor to stem the current that was carrying him to his death. But how vain was the effort! All hope had now fled, he was in the rapids, and whirling on with the velocity of lightning. Another breathless pause and he is at the brink of the falls. One moment more and the murderer stands in the presence of his God.

\* \* \* \* \*

About a week after the day upon which the above events transpired, the lifeless remains of a man were taken from the river several miles below the falls. The remains were large in stature, and from the proportions of the body, were supposed, when possessed with life, to have been endowed with almost superhuman strength. No one could be found to recognize the body, the features being so mutilated. But by more than one it was supposed to be all that was left of one who had escaped death in one form, only to meet him in another more terrible.

T. S.

## THE COQUETTE.

### A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"WHAT a beautiful creature," exclaimed Albert Howard to his friend, as they stood at the entrance of the ball room, "she is a perfect goddess."

"Who do you mean?" said Henry Stanhope, "for you have not yet told me of whom you speak in such raptures, though to judge by the direction your eyes have taken the goddess is none other than my old playmate Charlotte Ferney."

"What—that divine creature with the flashing eyes, that brilliant complexion, and such a queenly form—she one of your old playmates! Why, my dear fellow, you must have a heart of ice, else you would have been at her feet years ago."

"Always enthusiastic!" exclaimed Stanhope with a smile.

"And you are always stoical," retorted his friend, "but come, since you really do know this bewitching fairy, present me to her at once. I would give almost any thing for an introduction."

Stanhope answered by another of his meaning smiles, and taking his friend's arm, led him across the room to where Miss Ferney sat surrounded by her usual train of admirers. Making his way through these, Stanhope presented his friend to the beauty, and, after lingering a few minutes with the group, glided away to another quarter of the room.

Meanwhile Howard was endeavoring to entertain his new acquaintance, and, as few men could equal him in conversational ability, he soon became the most favored of the evening's suitors. When the next set took the floor, he succeeded in leading out Miss Ferney, and, as both were graceful dancers, they attracted directly the attention of the room. The gentleman had a fine figure, was known to possess a large fortune, and had a widely extended reputation as a man of ability. His partner was certainly the most beautiful woman in the room. Her form was faultless, and her dress was in the finest taste. The splendor of her complexion was unrivalled, her eyes were black and brilliant as a Sybil's, and her features were in the purest Grecian style and would have seemed cut out of marble, but for the carnation in her cheek. Always in high spirits, she seemed this evening, peculiarly gay; while her partner's evident admiration of her called even a richer color than usual into her cheek. To Charlotte Ferney it was an hour of triumph, and when, at the close of the ball, Howard escorted her to her carriage, her heart thrilled with the pride of a conquest which, she knew, was envied her by half of her sex in the room.

The next day Howard and Stanhope met in Chesnut Vol. I.—7

street, and the first words of the former, after the salutation, were in praise of Miss Ferney's beauty. After dwelling on her loveliness for some moments, during which Stanhope maintained silence, or only answered in monosyllables, Howard said,

"But what was the meaning of your smile last night, Stanhope!—there, you smile again in the same manner."

"I cannot see that it has any meaning. You take me to task unfairly."

"No evasion, Stanhope—I see you imply something by that smile and to be frank with you, I suspect you are no admirer—from what cause I know not—of Miss Ferney."

"You do me injustice, Howard, for I have ever thought Miss Ferney one of the most beautiful women of my acquaintance. But since you seem in earnest, I will be frank with you, and state what it is in Miss Ferney that I do not admire. In one word, then, she is a coquette."

For a minute Howard looked quizzically into his friend's face, appearing to smother an inclination to smile, but, at length, as if unable to restrain the impulse, he burst into a hearty laugh.

"Forgive me, Stanhope," he said at length, "but it is so inexpressibly ludicrous. I had thought, after your long harangue, that you were about to tell me something against Miss Ferney's family, or her education, or heaven knows what—but when you made the being a coquette, 'the head and front of her offending,' I could not restrain a laugh, impertinent as it was. Why, my dear fellow, half the girls we know are coquettes. Indeed I question whether a woman is good for much unless she is a bit of a flirt. I want one of your spicy, handsome girls for a wife, and not a dowdyish creature, as soft as cream, and about as thick-headed."

"I cannot agree with you on that subject at least," said Stanhope, "and I think experience would teach you that little happiness is to be found in the married state with a confirmed coquette. Nor is every one who is not a flirt a 'soft, dowdyish creature,' but on the contrary, they are often the sweetest as well as the most enchanting of their sex. A woman—believe me—who can trifle with a man's affections by encouraging or even allowing attentions which she is unwilling to ratify by marriage, is, at best, a heartless creature, incapable of loving as a woman should love, and deserving no pity if her own affections, or rather her vanity, should be outraged."

"You are warm, Stanhope," said his friend, "but even admitting the truth—which I will not—of all you say, you have, as yet, failed to shew that Miss Ferney is a confirmed coquette."

"Had you known her as long as I have, you would not have doubted it. I could name a dozen whom she has heartlessly jilted, after having given them every encouragement except that of words. Her conduct last

night alone would have convinced any one but a warm admirer like you. Her every motion was that of a practised flirt."

"Treason! treason!" laughingly exclaimed Howard "treason against one of the brightest of her sex. I see we shall never agree, Stanhope, on the merits of Miss Ferney, so we had better pass to some other theme. What say you to dropping in at Parkinson's?"

Thenceforth the two friends studiously avoided the subject, but Stanhope saw, with pain, that Howard became daily more attentive to Miss Ferney. We say with pain, for Charlotte Ferney was all that Stanhope had said. Beautiful, witty, and an only child, she had grown up a petted and spoiled darling, proud, vain, and selfish. Her coming out produced no little sensation in the fashionable world, for who could refuse to admire the brilliant Miss Ferney? Flattery was her daily food. At seventeen she had refused a dozen offers. Triumphant in the admiration she excited, she began at length to think that the other sex was fit only to be trampled on, and from being a careless flirt, she became a practised coquette.

But if her selfish heart was susceptible of love, Albert Howard had at length roused its affections; and almost from the hour when she first met him she learned to think of him differently from others of his sex. Yet, even to him, she was often wilful, and capricious. Howard, however, admired her too unreservedly to perceive these faults, and intoxicated by the praises bestowed on her beauty, he urged his suit so skilfully and perseveringly that at length Miss Ferney consented to become his wife.

For a while the newly married pair lived happily, for their time was spent in an uninterrupted round of amusements,—the flattery poured into her ears abroad, and the almost idolatrous attentions of her husband at home, sufficing to keep the bride in good humor. But this could not always last. The entertainments ensuing on her marriage were at length over, and the newly wedded wife had now to settle down into the monotonous, matter-of-fact routine of life. Of housewifery she was completely ignorant, so that her servants constantly imposed on her, to her husband's chagrin, and often disquiet; while accustomed to habits of unlimited indulgence, she could not bring herself down to the sacrifices of time which her duties required of her, so that even those matters which she did understand were almost daily neglected. She had always spent her mornings in promenading the most fashionable streets, and as she could not bring herself to give up the custom, she was often absent when her husband came home to dinner, so that he either had to await her return, or order the meal himself to be brought up. Nor was this all. Even in the evening the young wife found it impossible to remain at home contented. "She was not," she said "of a

domestic character: it would kill her to be cooped up at home, and sit moping a whole evening alone." Her husband was consequently forced to yield to her wishes. Instead of enjoying the quiet repose which he delighted in after the toils of the day, and which he had pictured to himself as one of the greatest pleasures of a married life, he was now dragged to the theatre, the ball room, concerts, or wherever else his wife could fly from her own hearth. In these places, too, her husband was only a secondary character. Thirsting for triumph as much as ever, she artfully drew around a crowd of admirers, and enjoyed the pique which she thus inflicted on younger and unmarried women. In vain her husband expostulated, she declared that he was no better than a jailor; and in these altercations Howard felt the full benefit of that wit he had so much admired. Instead of yielding to her husband's little humors, Mrs. Howard exacted submission in every thing from him as the price of peace, so that, though a man of strong mind, he, at length, became the mere slave of his wife. Every attempt, too, to release himself proved fruitless; for he found he could do so only at the cost of continual discord. His love soon perished under these circumstances, and he grew wholly indifferent to his bride, spending his time away from her side, in the billiard room, the bar-room, and other places of resort. His happiness for life was ruined. His dreams of domestic felicity were over, and he sought companionship among the vicious and abandoned. But we will not longer trace his history. We will give it in the words of his old friend Stanhope, who, one night, as he sat by his wife's side—for he had long been married to one who combined his ideas of a true companion—related it to her.

"Alas! poor Howard," he said, in reply to a question of his wife, asking why he was so sad, "it is his fate which makes me so. You know how unhappily he married, and how he has since given himself up to habits of dissipation. It is long since his practice has deserted him, and he has been for a year a common drunkard. Every effort to reform him has proved useless. At times he would admit his error, and shed maudlin tears over it; but the next day he would be as inebriated as ever. His wife's father, you know, died poor, and she has long subsisted on the charity of her relatives. She saw her error, it is said, but it was too late; for her husband was irretrievably a drunkard. To-day he was found drowned, and whether it is a suicide or not God only knows. His wife, on hearing the news, fell into violent hysterics, and I have just learned has since died, leaving her little family to the charity of strangers. And all this comes of being a coquette."

"But it is not always so," said Stanhope's wife, her eyes suffused with tears, "you should not judge poor Mrs. Howard so hardly."

"Perhaps not,—but when I think of the ruin of my

friend, and recollect how often a woman's coquetry has shipwrecked the happiness of others equally as noble-hearted originally, I have little pity for a confirmed coquette."

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From the Christian Souvenir for 1843.

## THE CORAL RING;

Or, The Temperance Pledge.

BY MRS. H. E. B. STOWE.

"There is no time of life in which young girls are so thoroughly selfish as from fifteen to twenty," said Edward Ashton, deliberately, as he laid down a book he had been reading, and leaned over the centre table.

"You insulting fellow!" replied a tall, brilliant-looking creature, who was lounging on an ottoman hard by, over one of Dickens' last works.

"Truth, coz—for all that," said the gentleman, with the air of one who means to provoke a discussion.

"Now, Edward, this is just one of your wholesale declarations—for nothing only to get me into a dispute with you, you know," replied the lady. "On your conscience, now, (if you have any,) is it not so?"

"My conscience feels quite easy, cousin, in subscribing to that very sentiment, as my confession of faith," replied the gentleman, with provoking sang froid.

"Pshaw!—it's one of your fusty old bachelor notions. See what comes, now, of living to your time of life without a wife,—disrespect for the sex, and all that. Really, cousin, your symptoms are getting alarming."

"Nay, now, cousin Florence," said Edward, "you are a girl of moderately good sense, with all your nonsense—now don't you (I know you *do*) think just so too?"

"Think just so too! do hear the creature!" replied Florence. "No, sir; you can speak for yourself in this matter, but I beg leave to enter my protest when you speak for me too."

"Well, now, where is there, coz, among all our circle, a young girl that has any sort of purpose or object in life to speak of, except to make herself as interesting and agreeable as possible—to be admired, and to pass her time in as amusing a way as she can? Where will you find one between fifteen and twenty that has any serious regard for the improvement and best welfare of those with whom she is connected at all, or that modifies her conduct in the least, with reference to it? Now, cousin, in very serious earnest, you have about as much real character, as much earnestness, and depth of feeling, and as much good sense, when one can get at it, as any young lady of them all, and yet, on your conscience, can you say that you live with any sort of reference to any body's good—or to any thing but your own present amusement and gratification?"

"What a shocking adjuration," replied the lady, "prefaced, too, by a three-story compliment! Well, being so adjured, I must think to the best of my ability. And now, serious-

ly and soberly, I don't see as I am selfish,—I do all that I have any occasion to do for any body. You know that we have servants to do every thing that is necessary about the house, so that there is no occasion for my making a display of house-wifely excellence; and I wait on mamma if she has a headache, and hand papa his slippers and newspaper, and find uncle John's spectacles for him twenty times a day, (no small matter that,) and then—"

"But after all, what is the object and purpose of your life?"

"Why—I haven't any. I don't see how I can have any—that is, as I am made. Now, you know I've none of the fussing, baby-tending, herb-making recommendations of aunt Sally, and divers others of the class commonly called useful. Indeed, to tell the truth, I think *useful* persons are commonly rather fussy and stupid. They are just like the boneset, and horehound, and catnip, very necessary to be raised in a garden, but not in the least ornamental."

"And you charming young ladies, who philosophize in kid slippers and French dresses, are the tulips and roses,—very charming and delightful, and sweet, but fit for nothing on earth but parlor ornaments."

"Well, parlor ornaments are good in their way," said the young lady, coloring, and looking a little vexed.

"So you give up the point, then," said the gentleman, "that that is all you girls are good for—just to amuse yourselves, amuse others, look pretty, and be agreeable."

"Well, and if we behave well to our parents, and are amiable in the family—I don't know—and yet," said Florence, sighing, "I have often had a sort of vague idea of something higher that we might become—yet really—what more than this is expected of us? what else can we do?"

"I used to read, in old-fashioned novels, about ladies visiting the sick and the poor," replied Edward. "You remember *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*?"

"Yes, truly; that is to say, I remember the story, part of it, and the love-scenes; but as for all those everlasting conversations of Dr. Barlow, Mr. Stanley, and nobody knows who else, I skipped those of course. But really this visiting and tending the poor, and all that, seems very well in a story, where the lady goes into a picturesque cottage, half overgrown with honeysuckle, and finds an emaciated, but still beautiful woman, sitting propped up by pillows. But come to the downright matter of fact of poking about in all those vile, dirty alleys, and entering little, dark rooms, amid troops of grinning children, and smelling codfish and onions, and nobody knows what—dear me, my benevolence al-

ways evaporates before I get through. I'd rather pay any body five dollars a day to do it for me than do it myself. The fact is, that I have neither fancy nor nerves for this kind of thing."

"Well, granting, then, that you can do nothing for your fellow-creatures unless you are to do it in the most genteel, comfortable and picturesque manner possible, is there not a great field for a woman like you, Florence, in your influence over your associates? With your talents for conversation, your tact and self-possession, and lady-like gift of saying any thing you choose, are you not responsible, in some wise, for the influence you exert over those by whom you are surrounded?"

"I never thought of it," replied Florence.

"Now, you remember the remarks that Mr. Fortesque made, the other evening, on the religious services at church?"

"Yes, I do; and I thought then he was too bad."

"And I do not suppose there was one of you ladies in the room that did not think so too; but yet the matter was all passed over with smiles, and with not a single insinuation that he had said any thing unpleasing or disagreeable."

"Well, what could we do? One does not want to be rude, you know."

"Do!—could you not, Florence, you who have always taken the lead in society, and who have been noted for always being able to say and do what you please,—could you not have shown him that those remarks were unpleasing to you, as decidedly as you certainly would have done if they had related to the character of your father or brother? To my mind, a woman of true moral feeling should feel herself as much insulted when her religion is treated with contempt, as if the contempt were shown to herself. Do you not *know* the power which is given to you women to awe and restrain us in your presence, and to guard the sacredness of things which you treat as holy? Believe me, Florence, that Fortesque, infidel as he is, would reverence a woman with whom he dared not trifle on sacred subjects."

Florence rose from her seat with a heightened color, her dark eyes brightening through tears.

"I am sure what you say is just, cousin, and yet I have never thought of it before. I will—I am determined to begin, after this, to live with some better purpose than I have done."

"And let me tell you, Florence, in starting a new course, as in learning to walk, taking the first step is every thing. Now, I have a first step to propose to you."

"Well, cousin—"

"Well, you know, I suppose, that among

your train of adorers you number Colonel Elliot?"

Florence smiled.

"And perhaps you do not know what is certainly true, that among the most discerning and cool part of his friends, Elliot is considered as a lost man."

"You astonish me, Edward! what do you mean?"

"Simply this, that with all his brilliant talents, his amiable and generous feelings, and his success in society, Elliot has not self-control enough to prevent his becoming confirmed in intemperate habits."

"I never dreamed of this," replied Florence. "I knew that he was spirited and free, fond of society, and exciteable, but never suspected any thing beyond."

"Elliot has tact enough never to appear in ladies' society when he is not in a fit state for it," replied Edward; "but yet it is so."

"But is he really so bad?"

"He stands just on the verge, Florence—just where a word fitly spoken might turn him. He is a noble creature, full of all sorts of fine impulses and feelings, the only son of a mother who doats on him, the idolized brother of sisters who love him as you love your brothers, Florence: and he stands where a word, a look—so they be of the right kind—might save him."

"And why, then, do you not speak to him?" said Florence.

"Because I am not the best person, Florence. There is another who could do it better—one whom he admires, who stands in a position which would forbid his feeling angry—a person, cousin, whom I have heard in gayer moments say, that she knew how to say any thing she pleased, without offending any body."

"Oh, Edward!" said Florence, coloring, "do not bring up my foolish speeches against me—and do not speak as if I ought to interfere in this matter, for indeed I cannot do it. I never could in the world; I am certain I could not."

"And so," said Edward, "you whom I have heard say so many things which no one else could say, or dared to say—you, who have gone on with such laughing assurance in your own powers of pleasing, shrink from trying that power when a noble and generous heart might be saved by it. You have been willing to venture a great deal for the sake of amusing yourself, and winning admiration, but you dare not say a word for any high or noble purpose. Do you not see how you confirm what I said of the selfishness of you women?"

"But you must remember, Edward, this is a matter of great delicacy."

"That word *delicacy* is a charming cover-

all, in all these cases, Florence. Now, here is a fine noble-spirited young man, away from his mother and sisters, away from any family friend who might care for him, tempted, betrayed, almost to ruin, and a few words from you, said as a woman knows how to say them, might be his salvation. But you will look coolly on and see him go to destruction, because you have too much *delicacy* to make the effort, like the man that would not help his neighbor out of the water because he had never had the honor of an *introduction*."

"But, Edward, consider how peculiarly fastidious Elliot is—how jealous of any attempt to restrain and guide him."

"And just for that reason it is that *men* of his acquaintance can do nothing with him. But what are you women made with so much tact and power of charming for, if it is not to do these very things that we men cannot do? It is a delicate matter—true; and has not Heaven given to you a fine touch, and a nice eye for just such delicate matters? Have you not seen, a thousand times, that what might be resented, as an impertinent interference on the part of a man, comes to us as a flattering expression of interest, from the lips of a woman?"

"Well, but, cousin, what would you have me do? how would you have me do it?" said Florence, earnestly.

"You know that Fashion, who makes so many wrong turns, and so many absurd ones, has at last made one right one, and it is now a fashionable thing to sign the Temperance Pledge. Elliot himself would be glad to do it, but he foolishly committed himself against it in the outset, and now feels bound to stand to his opinion. He has, too, been rather rudely assailed by some of the apostles of the new state of things, who did not understand the peculiar points of his character; in short, I am afraid that he will feel bound to go to destruction for the sake of supporting his own opinion. Now, if I should undertake with him, he might offer to shoot me; but I hardly think there is anything of the sort to be apprehended in your case. Just try your enchantments; you have bewitched wise men into doing silly things, before now; try, now, if you can't bewitch a foolish man into doing a wise thing."

Florence smiled archly, but instantly grew more thoughtful.

"Well, cousin," she said, "I will try. Though I think you are rather liberal in your ascriptions of power, yet I can put the matter to the test of experiment."

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Florence Elmore was, at the time we speak of, in her twentieth year. Born in one of the wealthiest families in ———, highly

educated and accomplished, idolized by her parents and brothers, she had entered society as one born to command. With much native nobleness, and magnanimity of character, with warm and impulsive feelings, and a capability of everything high or great, she had hitherto lived solely for her own amusement, and looked on the whole brilliant circle by which she was surrounded, with all its various actors, as something got up for her special diversion. The idea of influencing any one, for better or worse, by anything she ever said or did, had never occurred to her. The crowd of admirers, of the other sex, who, as a matter of course, were always about her, she regarded as so many sources of diversion; but the idea of feeling any sympathy with them as human beings, or of making use of her power over them for their improvement, was one that had never entered her head.

Edward Ashton was an old bachelor cousin of Florence's, who, having earned the title of oddity, in general society, availed himself of it to exercise a turn for telling the truth to the various young ladies of his acquaintance, especially to his fair cousin Florence. We remark, by the by, that these privileged truth-tellers are quite a necessary of life to young ladies, in the full tide of society; and we really think it would be worth while for every dozen of them to unite to keep a person of this kind, on a salary, for the benefit of the whole; however, that is nothing to our present purpose; we must return to our fair heroine, whom we left, at the close of the last conversation, standing in a deep reverie, by the window.

"It's more than half true," she said to herself, "more than half. Here am I, twenty years old, and I never have thought of anything, never have done anything, except to amuse and gratify myself; no purpose—no object—nothing high—nothing dignified—nothing worth living for!—only a parlor-ornament, heigh-ho! Well, I really do believe I could do something with this Elliot; and yet—how I dread to try."

Now, my good readers, if you are anticipating a love story, we must hasten to put in our disclaimer; you are quite mistaken in the case. Our fair, brilliant heroine was, at this time of speaking, as heart-whole as the diamond on her bosom, which reflected the light in too many sparkling rays ever to absorb it. She had, to be sure, half in earnest, half in jest, maintained a bantering platonic sort of friendship with George Elliot; she had danced, ridden, sung, and sketched with him; but so had she with twenty other young men; and as to coming to anything tender with such a quick, brilliant, restless creature, Elliot would as soon have under-

taken to sentimentalize over a glass of soda water. No, there was decidedly no love in the case.

"What a curious ring that is!" said Elliot to her a day or two after, as they were reading together.

"It's a knight's ring," said she, playfully, as she drew it off, and pointed to a coral cross set in the gold—"a ring of the red-crossed knights. Come, now, I've a great mind to bind you to my service with it."

"Do, lady fair!" said Elliot, stretching out his hand for the ring.

"Know, then," said she, "if you take this pledge, that you must obey whatever commands I lay upon you in its name."

"I promise!" said Elliot, in the mock heroic, and placed the ring on his finger.

An evening or two after, Elliot attended Florence to a party at Mrs. B——'s. Every thing was gay and brilliant, and there was no lack either of wit or wine. Elliot was standing in a little alcove, spread with refreshments, with a glass of wine in his hand. "I forbid it; the cup is poisoned," said a voice in his ear. He turned quickly, and Florence was at his side. Every one was busy, with laughing and talking, around, and nobody saw the sudden start and flush that these words produced, as Elliot looked earnestly in the lady's face. She smiled, and pointed playfully to the ring; but after all, there was in her face an expression of agitation and interest which she could not repress, and Elliot felt, however playful the manner, that she was *in earnest*, and as she glided away in the crowd, he stood with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the spot where she disappeared.

"Is it possible that I am suspected—that there are things said of me, as if I were in danger?" were the first thoughts that flashed through his mind. How strange that a man may appear doomed, given up, and lost, to the eye of every looker-on, before he begins to suspect himself! This was the first time that any defined apprehension of loss of character had occurred to Elliot, and he was startled as if from a dream.

"What the deuce is the matter with you Elliot? you look as solemn as a hearse!" said a young man near by.

"Has Miss Elmore cut you?" asked another.

"Come, man, have a glass," said a third.

"Let him alone—he's bewitched," said a fourth; "I saw the spell laid on him. None of us can say but our turn may come next."

An hour later that evening, Florence was talking with her usual spirit, to a group who were collected around her, when, suddenly looking up, she saw Elliot, standing in an

abstracted manner at one of the windows that looked out into the balcony.

"He is offended, I dare say," she thought; "but why should I care? For once in my life I have tried to do a right thing, a good thing; I have risked giving offence for less than this, many a time." Still, Florence could not but feel tremulous when, a few moments after, Elliot approached her, and offered his arm for a promenade. They walked up and down the room, she talking volubly, and he answering yes and no, and anything else, at cross purposes, till at length, as if by accident, he drew her into the balcony which overhung the garden. The moon was shining brightly, and everything without, in its placid quietness, contrasted strangely with the busy, hurrying scene within.

"Miss Elmore," said Elliot, abruptly, "may I ask you, sincerely, had you any design in a remark you made to me in the early part of the evening?"

Florence paused, and though habitually the most practised and self-possessed of women, the color actually receded from her cheek, as she answered—

"Yes, Mr. Elliot—I must confess that I had."

"And is it possible, then, that you have heard anything?"

"I have heard, Mr. Elliot, that which makes me tremble for you, and for those whose life I know is bound up in you; and, tell me, were it well, or friendly in me, to know that such things were said, that such danger existed, and not to warn you of it!"

Elliot stood a few moments in silence.

"Have I offended? Have I taken too great a liberty?" said Florence, gently.

Hitherto Elliot had only seen in Florence the self-possessed, assured, light-hearted woman of fashion; but there was a reality and depth of feeling in the few words she had spoken to him, in this interview, that opened to him entirely a new view in her character.

"No, Miss Elmore," said he, earnestly, after some pause; "I may be *pained*, offended I cannot be. To tell the truth, I have been thoughtless, excited, dazzled; my spirits, naturally buoyant have carried me, often, too far, and, lately, I have often painfully suspected my own powers of resistance; I have really felt that I needed help, but have been too proud to confess, even to myself, that I needed it. You, Miss Elmore, have done what, perhaps, no one else could have done. I am overwhelmed with gratitude, and I shall bless you for it to the latest day of my life. I am ready to pledge myself to anything you may ask on this subject."

"Then," said Florence, "do not shrink from doing what is safe and necessary and

right for you to do, because you have once said you would not do it. You understand me?"

"Precisely," replied Elliot; "and you shall be obeyed."

It was not more than a week before the news was circulated, that even George Elliot had signed the Pledge of Temperance. There was much wondering at this sudden turn among those who had known his utter repugnance to any measure of the kind, and the extent to which he had yielded to temptation; but few knew how fine and delicate had been the touch, to which his pride had yielded.

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Original.

## THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

BY MRS. CAROLINE ORNK.

"LANSINBURG! who should write to me from Lansinburg?" said Mrs. Harley, examining the post-mark of a letter which had just been handed her.

"Probably, Mrs. Hatton, your cousin," replied her husband.

By this time she had broken the seal, and glanced at the name of the writer.

"You are right," she replied, "but why Mrs. Hatton should write to *me*, I cannot imagine."

She ran her eye over the contents, and then with a smile, which certainly was not expressive of pleasure, informed her husband and daughters, that they were going to be honored with a visit from Gertrude Hatton, Mrs. Hatton's only daughter.

"When?" inquired Letitia and Clarissa, both in a breath.

"Next Wednesday, the day before we are going to have our party."

"How provoking," said Letitia, "to have a country cousin obtrude herself upon us at such a time. We shall, I suppose, be obliged, at any rate, to permit her to exhibit herself."

"Yes, if her dresses be made in the fashion of the last century," said Clarissa, "and her complexion, owing to exposure to the sun, be as dark as an Indian's."

"I cannot imagine what put it into Mrs. Hatton's head," said Mrs. Harley, "to think of sending her daughter here on a visit."

"Because I requested her to, I suppose," said Mr. Harley, "when I called at her house, last summer."

"Oh, I remember now," she replied, "that you thought it necessary because you had business at Lansinburg, to honor your wife's cousin by a call."

"Then you have been there, papa," said Clarissa, "did you see this cousin Gertrude?"

"Yes."

"And did she not appear extremely awkward?"

"About as much so, as you and Letitia, I should think."

"Now, papa, you are joking."

"Of course, he is," said Mrs. Harley, "but, for my part, I think it too serious an affair to joke about. If we had not sent cards of invitation, we would give the party up."

Mr. Harley made no remark, but, as he rose to leave the room, a smile might have been seen lurking in his merry black eyes.

"Do stop one moment, papa," said Clarissa, "and tell us how she looks."

"I am not very good at description," he replied, "and as she is to be here next Wednesday, you can then, judge for yourselves."

"I wonder if she will come in the stage?" said Letitia.

"I should not wonder," said Clarissa, "if she should obtain a conveyance in some neighbor's market-cart."

"It will not do for us to spend any more time talking about it," said Mrs. Harley, "for it is now time for us to go to the dress-maker's. She said she should have a fresh supply of elegant trimmings, and Letitia must give her final orders respecting her dress."

"To-day is Wednesday, is it not?" said Letitia Harley to her sister.

"Yes, and pupa says that the stage from Lansburg arrives at four o'clock. It wants only five minutes of four now. I hope there will not be anything about this cousin of ours so very queer, for if there be, as you know my risible faculties are extremely excitable, I shall, as likely as not, laugh in her face."

"I shall feel too much vexed to laugh," replied Letitia.

"We must all endeavor to do the best we can," said Mrs. Harley.

"True to the minute," said Clarissa, looking out at the window. The hand of the clock is just upon four, and there the stage comes whirling along as fast as the horses can carry it."

By the time the stage drove up before the door, Letitia and Clarissa had both contrived to so shelter themselves behind the window curtains, that they could see without being seen.

"That is she, I'll be bound," said Clarissa.

"Which one do you mean?" said Letitia.

"The one that has on that old leghorn hat, which looks as if it had gone through half a dozen ablutions, and seems a fair candidate for a seventh. Would you believe it, she has not a bit of a glove on, and her hands are as large and black as a ploughman's."

"She is preparing to alight, sure enough," said Letitia. "No, I am mistaken—she is only making room for some person to pass her."

"And a girl with beautiful black eyes,—complexion like a lily, and one of the most delightful little bonnets I ever saw, has risen, as if she imagined she had arrived at her journey's end," said Clarissa.

"Is it possible that can be Gertrude Hatton?" said Letitia.

"It must be," replied Clarissa, "for she has got out of the stage, and the driver is taking off a trunk. Papa might have described her to us, and then I should not have been so shocked at the sight of that old leghorn and those great black hands."

By this time, Gertrude was on her way to the parlor, preceded by a servant, who had received orders, that should a female arrive in the stage, let her appearance be ever so ordinary, by no means to wait on her into the kitchen. Gertrude entered with a graceful, though timid air, while a rich color, the effect of excitement, glowed on her cheeks. She was certainly somewhat embarrassed at meeting with her stately aunt and stylish cousins, but with a figure of perfect symmetry, and with manners devoid of the slightest affectation, she could not appear awkward. When she laid aside her bonnet, her long, profuse hair, somewhat discomposd

by her journey, and which wore the same rich gloss of the raven's plumage when glanced upon by the sunbeam, might have excited envy in the bosoms of even her fair cousins. Mrs. Harley discovered at once, that in the room of the anticipated foil, her daughters stood in danger of a rival, and she began to recollect, that Gertrude's mother had been one of the most beautiful and elegant girls of her time, as well as the most highly educated. Under the direction of such a mother, Gertrude's education was not likely to be neglected, and it was in truth much superior, in many respects, to that of Letitia and Clarissa. It is true that she was not acquainted with the usages of polished society as it exists in the city, but the home-circle to which she was accustomed, was refined and intelligent, and to one like her, who seemed to possess an almost intuitive perception of what was just and proper, there was little danger of committing any gross violation of etiquette, or of transgressing any conventional rule.

Although Mrs. Harley had been on terms of the closest intimacy with her cousin, during their girlhood, she renounced all intercourse with her after marriage, she having had the good fortune to secure for her husband a man of wealth, while the narrow income of Mr. Hatton made it necessary for him and his wife to be content with the comforts of life without aspiring to its luxuries. Mr. Harley, being naturally of a social and friendly disposition, and thinking Mrs. Hatton, now a widow, might be in straitened circumstances, resolved, at the time business drew him to the town where she resided, to call on her, and if possible ascertain if pecuniary assistance would in any shape be acceptable. A glance at her neat and even elegant establishment satisfied him that none was needed, and in the course of conversation she informed him that her husband, several years before his decease, had very unexpectedly received a handsome legacy from a distant relative. They parted with feelings of mutual esteem and good will, but not 'till he had exacted a promise from her that she would permit Gertrude to come the next September and spend a few weeks with them. It was with considerable reluctance that she promised to comply with his request, but Gertrude, with those fond anticipations of youth which paint new and distant scenes in such fairy colors, expressed so great an eagerness to go, that she could not find it in her heart to deny her. Mr. Harley was restrained by motives which he did not care to minutely analyze, from mentioning that Gertrude had engaged to make them a visit. He probably, however, had a presentiment that the intelligence would not be very graciously received, and preferred to have the storm burst at once, without the intervention of a series of promontory clouds. For particularly desiring Gertrude's visit, he had a motive of his own, which he cherished with a good deal of fondness, for she had particularly struck his fancy. He had wisely determined within himself, to let things take their own course, naturally concluding they would be the more likely to turn out according to his wishes. These may be surmised from a conversation between him and his wife the evening after Gertrude's arrival.

"I am surprized at your indiscretion," said she, "in inviting Gertrude Hatton here to make a visit. Before seeing her, I was alarmed lest we should have occasion to blush at her rusticity, but now, a much more formidable cause of alarm awaits us."

"What is it?"

"I wonder you should ask. Are we not expecting Edward to-morrow, and do you not see that it will occasion the derangement of all our plans to have a girl possessing so much personal beauty thrown in his way?"

"Your plans, you should say."

"I am willing to have them attributed to me," she replied. "I am proud of being the author of any plan which will effect a match between our only son and the young heiress."

"You call her young out of courtesy I suppose, for she is at least, six years older than Edward."

"Well, it is not necessary to tell her exact age, for by candle-light, she will pass for a person half a dozen years younger than she is."

"But I defy even candle-light to make her look handsome, with plenty of pearl-powder and rouge into the bargain."

"Now, why need you allude to such trifles. It is the privilege of our sex to endeavor to make ourselves agreeable to yours. I hope you will not think of mentioning such a trifling circumstance to Edward."

"By no means. I think his eyes will serve him in that respect, the same as mine did me."

"A person would imagine by your remarks that you thought the hundred thousand dollars to which Miss Hammons is heiress, is a paltry consideration, as well as her being connected with some of the first families in the country. If we can only bring about a marriage between her and Edward, it will be the means of introducing us to those families, which will undoubtedly result in our daughters' being eligibly situated for life."

"Edward may do as he likes," said Mr. Harley, "I shall not seek to control him, but if I were in his place, I would rather marry Gertrude Hatton without a cent, than Sucky Hammons with a million of dollars."

"How can you talk so. A person might think that a man of your experience would hold beauty at its just value."

"And so I do. I would give nothing for beauty without amiability. But I must say that it is a refreshing sight for eyes even as old as mine, to look at such a beautiful and innocent face as Gertrude's. To me it affords a pleasure similar to looking at a fine picture."

"One thing I must say," said Mrs. Harley, "and that is, I shall consider it very unkind of you, if you should endeavor to promote a match between our son and Gertrude."

"I shall do no such thing. I wish him to act according to his free, unbiassed inclination. If he prefer Sucky Hammons——"

"Now husband don't call her Sucky—her name is Susan, and Edward dislikes the name of Sucky."

"Susan Hammons then. As I was saying, if he prefer her above all others, I am willing he should marry

her, but I do not wish him to bind himself to her for life, for the sake of her hundred thousand dollars, for I can give him twice that sum myself."

"But her connexions—I think more of those than I do of her fortune, because, as I have already mentioned, it will be likely to prove the means of settling our daughters eligibly."

"I should take as much pleasure in having them well settled as yourself, but I do not wish our only son to sacrifice his happiness for their advantage."

"There is something I wish you to promise me."

"Well, what is it?"

"That you will refrain from pointing out Miss Hammons' defects."

"I will do more than you require—I will take every opportunity to praise her."

"No, no," replied his wife, seeing a smile lurking at the corners of his mouth, "I had rather you would be silent."

"Just as you say," he replied, resuming the newspaper he had laid aside at the commencement of the conversation.

Edward Harley had been absent from home a long time, engaged in the study of the law, for he thought with his father, that should the wheel of Fortune take a sudden turn, it would be best not to be thrown upon the world without any resource. He had now finished his studies, and on Thursday, was expected in the morning cars. It was in honor of his return, that the splendid party, which had been projecting a number of weeks, was to take place in the evening. Thursday arrived, and at the appointed hour a carriage drove up before the door. The next minute Edward was in the hall, receiving the warm and eager welcome of his parents and sisters.

"Ah, Edward," said Mr. Harley, after the first warm gush of feeling had subsided, "time which is stealing from me, is dealing bountifully with you. I could scarcely have imagined that a year would have so much added to your good looks. I hope the mind has kept pace with the goodly exterior."

Gertrude, who had remained behind in the parlor, had a good opportunity through the open door to observe the looks and demeanor of her cousin, and "how much better I like him than his sisters," was the thought that thrilled her heart and was almost murmured by her lips. It might indeed have been difficult to have selected a young man so well formed in every respect to strike the fancy of a girl like her. A noble figure with one of those finely shaped heads that a sculptor would select for a model—a broad brow, white and clear, shaded with hair rich and as intensely black as her own—dark, intellectual eyes, at some moments almost spiritual in their expression, and a superb mouth with its somewhat haughty curve, which he could exchange at will for smiles the most fascinating, constituted an ensemble which realized the picture often presented to her imagination in those moments of revery, which in the retirement of her own sweet home she could indulge unchecked. He entered the room gaily chatting, when

suddenly his eye fell on Gertrude. He checked himself and bowed to her with an air of considerable embarrassment, for whatever confidence station, joined with personal advantages might conspire to give him, his late secluded life together with his close communion with Coke and Blackstone, were not of a nature to put him at ease in the presence of one possessing the queenly, yet half timid beauty of Gertrude Hatton. His father hastened to introduce her to him, and it was one of the most delightful moments of his life, when his lips touched her cheek, rich with the hues of health and pleasing excitement.

As soon as something like order was restored to the domestic circle, his mother informed him respecting the party, and that there was a rich heiress in town, whose connexions were among some of the first people in the country.

"She is very intimate with Letitia and me," said Clarissa. "You will have an opportunity to see her this evening, as she will be to the party."

"Is the party mother has been speaking of, to be this evening?" said Edward.

"Most certainly," replied his mother. "All your old friends are desirous to see you, and we could do no less than to make arrangements to gratify them."

"I should have preferred spending the first evening after so long an absence from home, by ourselves," said he, "but as you have decided otherwise, I must submit with as good a grace as possible."

"Do you think," said Mrs. Harley, addressing her eldest daughter, "that Miss Hammons will accept Mr. Winthrop, should he propose?"

Letitia turned a look of inquiry towards her mother, for knowing that Mr. Winthrop had not the least idea of proposing to the lady in question, she did not, at first, comprehend her meaning. A hasty but expressive look which her mother directed towards Edward, afforded the requisite explanation.

"I don't know," replied Letitia, "but that she may possibly accept it, but she is so extremely fastidious, that I think Mr. Winthrop will hardly suit her."

"Do you mean Harry Winthrop, my old chum?" inquired Edward.

"Yes," replied his sister.

"She must be fastidious indeed," said he, "if she would refuse him. Why, he is the finest fellow I ever knew—handsome, amiable, intelligent, intellectual.—I may as well break off first as last, for there is not an adjective in the English language expressive of any good quality that will not apply to him."

"For all that," said Mrs. Harley, "she may not fancy him."

"This Miss Hammons is very beautiful, I suppose," said Edward, "or she would not be so difficult to please."

"I cannot say that she is," replied his mother, "which to my mind is a decided recommendation. I never knew a beauty," and she looked towards Gertrude, "who was not both vain and selfish. But there is a certain charm about Miss Hammons that I cannot

describe, which I hope will not fail to be apparent to you as to me."

"It will, unless you look in her strong box for it," murmured his father, half audibly, "for I am certain it is no where else."

Edward, without replying raised his eyes to his fair cousin, and thought that if there were a greater charm about Miss Hammons than her, it must indeed be indescribable.

Letitia and Clarissa were attired in due season in fashionable and very splendid dresses. Diamonds, which Mrs. Harley had persuaded her husband they ought to afford their eldest daughter, flashed amid the dark hair of Letitia, while the paler gleam of pearls shone among the light brown curls of her sister. The dress of Gertrude was India muslin of exceeding fineness, which floated in drapery, light as the fleecy cloud, round her exquisitely moulded form. Diamonds might not have been unbecoming to her style of beauty, but these she could not afford, and a few sprigs of the lily of the valley, wreathed with her jet black hair, constituted her only ornament.

Among those first to arrive was Henry Winthrop, and he and Edward were soon living over again their former days of companionship. Having nearly exhausted those themes of retrospective interest, they began to turn their attention to objects which were present.

"By the way, Edward," said Mr. Winthrop, as his eye glanced over the assemblage of beauty and fashion, "has that little country cousin your sisters told me they expected, arrived?"

"Oh, yes."

"But I see no one here, answering to the description they gave me of her."

"They probably gave you a fancy sketch, as they never had seen her."

"I hope her appearance does not realize their fears, for although they attempted to conceal it under a show of pleasantry, I found that they felt no little mortification at the idea of having a relation fresh from the woods take it into her head to visit them just in time to exhibit herself before Miss Hammons, the heiress, and other distinguished guests, who are present this evening. I believe they intended to make an attempt to induce her to seclude herself 'till the party was over, and I regret to find that they have succeeded, for, to confess the truth, I like occasionally, to refresh my eye with a forest flower, even if it be not of the most delicate kind."

Edward smiled at his friend's last remark, as he inquired if he were acquainted with all the ladies present.

"By no means," he replied, "for I have, as well as you, been absent from my native city. It is scarcely three weeks since my return, and I can count nearly a dozen faces that are new to me."

"Then," said Edward, "first informing you that this

cousin of ours is present, I am going to set you—Yankee fashion—to guessing which she is."

"Agreed," replied Winthrop, and he commenced a careful survey of the figures and faces of those ladies who were unknown to him. "I have," he at length said, "selected two between whom I am unable to decide."

"Point them out to me," said Edward.

"You see yonder tall, red-haired girl with a face, if seen by day-light must display a profusion of freckles, and whose awkward figure has baffled all the skill of the dress-maker."

"Yes."

"That, may I think, be the right one, though I hope it is the other, for your sake and your sisters, if, as they told me, she is going to spend several weeks with you. Look at that pretty brunette with those bright black eyes, rosy cheeks, cherry lips, and teeth like two rows of pearl. Her figure, though by no means fairy-like, is remarkably good, and those pretty little feet, peeping from beneath the hem of her simple but tasteful dress, look just fit to press the emerald turf gemmed with flowers. You shake your head, as if I had not yet found the right one. I shall, however, whether she be your cousin or not, request an introduction to her—she strikes my fancy."

"Will you not try again?" said Edward.

"Perhaps we shall not find any better amusement," he replied.

"Let me examine more critically. I see," resumed he, after a short silence, "one very beautiful girl, a few that are pretty, and a number who are very indifferent looking, but surely, not one of them can be this cousin Gertrude, as your sisters call her. The air acquired by mixing in fashionable society cleaves too much to all of them."

"Is there not one exception?" said Edward, as his eyes rested upon Gertrude.

"Why, *that* girl would do for a princess," said Winthrop. "Her eyes, for all they are veiled so timidly beneath those long, drooping lashes resting on cheeks that seem just about to blush, can, if occasion call, flash right keenly, I will be bound, and that mouth, beautiful as a rose-bud beginning to bloom, can, I have no doubt, curve as haughtily as even my friend, Edward Harley's. Why, she is the one bright star of the whole assembly, and my pretty brunette the one sweet flower. The star for you—the flower for me—that is, if we can win them?"

"Edward," said Letitia, who at this moment approached them, "why have you not sought to be introduced to Miss Hammons? she has been here this half hour."

"All in good time, Letty," he replied, giving her his arm.

The watchful eyes of his father, mother, and it must be confessed, of Gertrude, were upon him at the moment the introduction took place, and although he offered her the arm which his sister had relinquished, in order to join those who were promenading the brilliant apart-

ments, the smiles that beamed in the eyes of Mr. Harley, and which he, with difficulty, prevented from visiting his lips, the momentary frown that knit the brows of Mrs. Harley, and, above all, the shade of solitude, which, like a cloud, flitted from the face of Gertrude, might have truly indicated to an observer, acquainted with the secret wishes of each, the impression made upon his mind by Miss Hammons, the heiress. She soon found that, although she retained his arm, she could not fix his attention, and she moreover perceived that a Mr. Grant, who was a bachelor of forty, and consequently, near her own age, directed frequent glances towards her, which made her imagine that it would be by no means disagreeable to him to take her partner's place. Mr. Grant, though far from being handsome, was rather a comely looking gentleman, and was in possession of a very good estate. All he needed was a wife and a little ready money. It is not improbable that while he was revolving these wants in his mind, and the best means of supplying them, he might direct his attention to Miss Hammons more steadily than he was aware. It was not long before she complained of fatigue, and Edward, much to the satisfaction of both, soon discovered an unoccupied seat on a sofa. He immediately sought Gertrude, whom he found in company with his friend Winthrop, and Althea Hilliard, the pretty brunette. Scarcely fifteen minutes had elapsed, when he felt a hand rather energetically grasp his arm. He looked round and beheld his mother.

"Do you forget," said she, "that there are ladies present, who should share your attention, that you so exclusively devote yourself to her?"

"One of them has, at least," he replied, "received a pretty good share of it. I wandered from room to room with Miss Hammons, 'till she was almost dying with fatigue. I am happy, however, to find that she has so soon recovered, for see, she goes yonder with Mr. Grant, and they seem highly delighted with each other."

"Certainly," replied his mother. "Miss Hammons is far too well bred to appear otherwise than pleased with a person, especially an elderly one, like Mr. Grant, who presumes to claim her attention. But I know what her taste is."

Edward smiled as if he thought that he likewise knew—offered his mother his arm, and told her he was ready to be introduced to any lady she chose.

Four months had elapsed since the evening of the party, and autumn had long since gathered up its robes, and departed to give place to winter. It was one of those still but keen and brilliant evenings, which makes exercise grateful in the open air, and within doors the glow of a clear, sparkling fire extremely comfortable, that two ladies were sitting together in one of the most pleasantly situated dwellings in Lansingburg. There was an air of comfort in their well-furnished parlor, which might often be sought in vain, in the splendid apartments of the city palace.

The eldest of the ladies, though rising forty, was still eminently handsome. Her dark hair, which appeared in front of a tasteful and becoming cap, and was

smoothly parted over her serene and noble brow, was bright and glossy as in the days of her youth; and her fine teeth, still untouched by decay, preserved her mouth in all its original beauty of formation. Her appearance was stately and elegant, and every movement perfectly lady-like. She held some needle-work in her hands, but she frequently paused in her work, that she might give her attention more undividedly to some passages which her daughter was reading aloud from a favorite author. Although she read well, as a person possessing a sweet and musical voice, with a fine and highly cultivated taste ever must, it was evident that she did not surrender her whole soul to the enchanting page, as might have been expected from the imaginative and intellectual cast of her countenance. Suddenly she threw her book upon the table, and approaching a window, drew aside the curtain. The snow, which had partially melted beneath the beams of a meridian sun, and since congealed by the evening frost, glittered like jewels in the light of a cloudless moon, giving to the scene an aspect of cold splendor.

Gertrude smiled, though she evidently felt slightly annoyed at having exhibited any thing like impatience even in the presence of her mother. Dropping the curtain, she resumed her seat, and taking up some sewing, commenced plying her needle in a very calm and composed manner. It still lacked nearly five minutes of seven, when the merry peal of the stageman's horn came ringing by, and in a minute more the still merrier peal of bells filled the air with music. Suddenly all was silent.

"The stage has stopped at the hotel," said Mrs. Hatton, "and Edward will not come to-night."

The words had hardly escaped her lips, when the bells were again heard jingling, intermingled with the clatter of horses' hoofs upon the hard-beaten path. Nearer and nearer drew the sounds, and deeper and deeper grew the eloquent blushes upon the cheeks of Gertrude. The stage passed swiftly by—made a rapid and graceful turn, that the horses' heads might look towards their place of rest for the night, and then drew up before the door. Hardly a moment had passed, before Edward Harley was in the parlor with the white hand of Gertrude clasped in his own. He then turned to Mrs. Hatton, and the cordial and familiar manner with which she greeted him, showed that he was no strange guest.

What a world of enjoyment was crowded into that one evening. At first, their words were few, even those of Mrs. Hatton, for, like morning flowers, still heavy with the incense dropped from the skies, their hearts were too full of deep, rich feeling to find utterance in words. While Mrs. Hatton mingled the old memories which had long been garnered in her bosom, with the scenes of the present, Edward and Gertrude recalled the moment when, like the harp of the winds which slumbers 'till visited by the airs of heaven, their hearts gave their first thrilling music to the breath of love. Before they parted for the night, Edward ventured to express the wish, that in three weeks his marriage with Gertrude might be celebrated.

"It will be impossible," said Gertrude. "There are so many things to get in readiness, that twice that time is the least that can be thought of."

They finally agreed that her mother should be the arbitress, and she decided in favor of Edward.

It was not 'till the ensuing day, when themes of personal interest had become somewhat exhausted, that Edward informed them that Henry Winthrop and Althea Hilliard had ratified their vows at the altar, and that Mr. Grant—naturally careful and circumspect in all his proceedings—after having for a long time balanced the advantages and disadvantages likely to accrue from such measures, had finally proposed to Miss Hammons, and was accepted. "A consummation for which I should be most devoutly thankful," said Harley, "for 'till matters arrived at such a crisis, my mother daily read me the catalogue of the lady's good qualities, always winding up with certain hints, which I could not fail to understand."

It was a fine, clear morning—that on which Edward was to take his departure—the sunbeams glancing like golden arrows on the encrusted snow. They could see from the window, that the broad street that crossed the heart of the village, was full of life, and that among other moving objects, was the stage-coach just starting from the hotel. In a few seconds it was at the door.

"Three weeks, dearest Gertrude—three weeks," murmured Edward, "and I shall return and claim you as my own."

The words seemed yet breathing in her ear, when she saw that he had taken his seat in the carriage. One wave of his hand from the window, and then he was gone.

Mrs. Harley, when she found that the wedding day was really fixed, told her daughter, that although Edward might have made a much better match, she was determined to make the affair as respectable as possible, by lending it her countenance. Their father, she said, who had, from the first, been strangely infatuated with Gertrude, was resolved to witness the ceremony—that she, of course, should accompany him, and that, upon the whole, she thought they had better write to their cousin, and propose themselves for bridesmaids. The girls highly delighted with the idea, immediately wrote, requesting an answer by the next mail. It was received, wherein their offer was very gracefully accepted, and the ensuing day was spent in selecting materials for their dresses.

The day appointed for the bridal, arose without a cloud. The preliminary arrangements met the approbation of all parties. Even Mrs. Harley confessed that they were in good taste. Mr. Harley could not refrain from expressing, in a low voice to her mother, his admiration of the lovely appearance of the bride.

"I don't know another girl within a hundred miles," said he, "that would make Edward so charming a wife, and to confess the truth, I am of the opinion that there are not many young men within the same distance who are in all respects equal to him."

"Our opinions do not widely differ as regards either," replied Mrs. Hatton, with a smile.

## AUNT MERCY.

BY MRS. C. LEE HENTZ.

## PART II.

ABOUT three months after my interview with Aunt Mercy under the elm tree, I received a letter from my sister Laura, inviting me in the name of Mrs. Belmont, to become a guest of that lady, that I might be present at her own wedding, which was about to be consummated. A summons from another world could hardly have been more astounding. I had become so completely domesticated with Aunt Mercy, so accustomed to the regularity and solemnity of her household arrangements, and the seclusion of her cottage life, that I shrunk with dismay from mingling in scenes for which nature and education so completely unfitted me. I could not bear the idea of leaving Aunt Mercy, who seemed to me every day drawing nearer, perceptibly nearer, to her everlasting rest. I thought I could perceive a change in her ever since the agitating evening when I had so incautiously stirred the slumbering depths of memory. "No," said I, closing the letter, and laying it in her lap, "I cannot leave you, Aunt Mercy, even to attend my sister's wedding. My presence will not add to *her* happiness, and it is necessary to *yours*. Another thing, I dread the temptations that surround her, and fear I might lose the tranquillity of mind I have acquired since my residence with you."

"The principles that cannot resist temptation, my dear Fanny," replied she, "are not founded on the Rock of ages. If they are based on sand, it is better that the winds and waves should beat against them and prove their weakness, before the storm from which there is no shelter shall descend, and the soul be lost in the ruins. You are very young, and the world is all before you. You have a part to act in its busy scenes, which you must not shrink from performing. When your father returns he will claim his own, and if, through the divine blessing, you have here been taught in what manner to fulfil your filial duties, you may, by gentleness, meekness, and piety, allure to brighter worlds and lead the way." Your sister, too, has a claim on your sympathy, which ought not to be disregarded. Your companionship at such a moment may be a blessing to her, without proving a snare to yourself."

"You think it, then, my duty to go?" said I, surprised to find that my inclinations did not rebel at the decree.

"I do," she replied; "for the ties of nature should never be entirely sundered. To one who, like me, is about to pass away to that country inhabited by one great family of love, it matters not how few links remain of life's broken chain. But you, I trust, have many days in prospect; and

young hearts, like the vines of the forest, love to interlace together, and though weak in themselves, thus form a shelter from the tempest, and a barrier from the strong."

I was astonished at Aunt Mercy's decision, but yielding implicitly to her judgment, I commenced my preparations for a speedy departure.

"I shall shame my fashionable sister," said I, as I folded my garments of plain, undecorated white, and placed them in my trunk; "and my manners will be as rustic as my dress."

"Carry with you the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, my child," exclaimed my venerable aunt, "and you will far transcend the daughters of fashion. The lily of the valley is clothed in white, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Oh! my dear Fanny," continued she, "be not yourself ashamed of the robes of Christian simplicity, nor fear to adorn the doctrines of God, your Saviour, in the midst of an ungodly world."

"Ah! let me stay," cried I, inexpressibly affected by the solemnity of her manner; "I fear to enter upon scenes so untried and so dangerous. Laura cares not for me, and, perhaps, only asked my presence from a sense of duty."

"And does not that sense urge you to acceptance?" said she. "I wish you to love each other, and endeavour to strengthen the bonds of sisterly affection. If you tremble at untried dangers, you know whose strength can be made perfect in your weakness."

Thus, till the very moment of my departure, did this aged saint continue to fortify my mind, from the armory of the gospel, against the assaults of temptation. I cannot describe the feelings with which I bade her farewell. There seemed a halo of sanctity drawn around her, over which no dark passion ever rolled; and while near her, I could move in the light of this hallowed circle, safe from those influences which were never permitted to encroach on its lustre. But aloof from her, what clouds might darken, what meteors cross my path? Then, the dread that I should never see her more, overwhelmed me. I wanted to be near Aunt Mercy when she *died*. I wanted to see how a *Christian could die; to witness, as well as believe, the triumph of faith over the terrors of death, and to catch the lingering light of the spirit's upward track*. Long after I had received her parting blessing, I continued to look back through blinding tears, at her still, stately figure, as she stood, invested with time's prophetic majesty, on the threshold of her dwelling, till the winding of the road concealed her from my view.

At the end of the second day, I arrived at Mrs. Belmont's; whose large mansion, illuminated brilliantly in front, contrasted so strikingly with Aunt Mercy's low cottage and solitary lamp, my heart died within me, in apprehension of the magnificence within. It was a mild evening in early summer, and the curtains were festooned back to admit the air that flowed in, loaded with the fragrance of the flowers that bordered the yard; and through the opening, I could discern figures moving backward and forward in the apartment, and amidst them I plainly distinguished that of Laura, leaning on the arm of a gentleman, who, I imagined, must be her future bridegroom. She was gaily dressed; her cheeks were flushed with excitement, and her eyes sparkled vividly as they were upturned to him, who was leaning down, as if to catch the faintest sound of her voice. My heart yearned towards her. She was my only sister, and she was so beautiful, so much more beautiful than I had ever seen her before! There was such a sunshine on her countenance, it surely must have flowed from the fountain of the heart.

As soon as I was announced, she came to the door to greet me, and kissed me with affectionate cordiality; but when I threw my arms around her, and clasped her closer to me, she endeavoured to loosen herself from the hold, and said in a tone betwixt mirth and vexation—"Why Fanny, you are as rustic as ever; you will ruin my dress; only see what a fright you have made of me." Then smoothing down the folds of her dress, and arranging her disordered lace, her eyes ran over my figure with a criticising glance. At length, bursting into a loud laugh, she exclaimed—"A second edition of Aunt Mercy, revised and corrected by all that's ancient! I never saw such a resemblance in my life. You have caught her very expression, and the sound of her voice."

"I wish I could indeed resemble her, Laura," replied I, wounded at her levity, and chilled by her coldness. I despaired of her ever having one feeling in unison with mine. There seemed a gulf between us with icy edges, on which sensibility shivered and sought in vain to pass over. I pleaded weariness, and was permitted to retire to the chamber prepared for me, and Laura returned to company far more congenial than mine. Never did I feel more sad and lonely than that evening, when, seated by myself in a little recess by the bedside, I heard the confused sounds of merriment, mingled with music, rising from below, and thought that probably there was not one being in the household who remembered an omnipresent Deity, or felt that He had one claim on their reverence, gratitude and love. How I longed for the wings of the dove, that I might fly back to my beloved cottage, and its holy-minded inmate! I already began to feel the effects of coming in contact with vanity and selfishness. Laura's ridicule of my personal appearance stung me to the quick. I rose, and looking at myself in a mirror much larger and more magnificent than any I had ever yet seen,

contrasted my face, pale from weariness and disfigured by tears, with Laura's brilliant complexion and starry eyes, and my figure, dressed in the simplicity of childhood, yet with something of the formality of age, with hers, modelled by the hand of art, and decorated with the prodigality of fashion. Conscious of the unworthy motives that led me to the comparison, I blushed even in solitude, and turning away from a contemplation that humbled and depressed me, I met the glance of a very lovely woman, just entering the apartment.

"And this is Laura's sister," exclaimed she, taking both my hands in hers, and gazing smilingly in my face; "I wanted to welcome you the moment I heard of your arrival; but I could not leave some friends who were about taking their departure. You must not feel as if you were a stranger here. I hope, in time, you will like me as well as Aunt Mercy."

It was impossible not to be charmed by the sweetness and grace of Mrs. Belmont's manner, and the sound of her voice was inexpressibly soothing.

"You are yet, I perceive," added she, twisting her jewelled fingers through ringlets, which had never been shorn, "an untutored child of nature. You must not suffer these beautiful tresses to come under the hands of a fashionable hair-dresser. They correspond exactly with your style of dress, which is quite *taking* from its simplicity."

My wounded vanity was rapidly healing, while Mrs. Belmont distilled such honied accents.

"I feared I should shock you by my unfashionable ways," replied I; "Laura has already been laughing at my obsolete garments. But indeed, my dear madam, if you are satisfied, I would rather be permitted to dress as I have been accustomed to, for I should feel very strange, attired as my sister now is."

"You shall do exactly as you please, my dear. And I assure you, perfect simplicity is charming from its novelty, and is particularly attractive to the other sex. You must not mind Laura's raillery. Her beauty is of such a brilliant kind, that ornaments are in keeping with it; but yours is of a gentler character, and becomes the simple garb you wear."

My beauty! It was the first time I had received a direct compliment to my beauty; and after this graceful and flattering lady had retired, I again turned to the mirror to see if my features justified her eulogium. My cheeks were no longer pale, and the dimness caused by tears had vanished in the sunshine of her smiles. I smoothed the disordered ringlets she had so much admired, and as they waved in the lamp-light in golden ripples, I wondered I had not been more sensible of their beauty. Conscience, at this moment, like the ring of Syndaric, gave a warning pressure, or rather a greater than Syndaric manifested his presence to my soul, by one of those silent admonitions which were heard by the prophet in "the still small voice."

I searched for the Bible which Aunt Mercy had put in my trunk with her own hands, and turning to some chapters we had often read together, and which were associated with the remembrance of our hours of nightly devotion, the mists of vanity soon evaporated in the heavenly beams of the Sun of Righteousness. I forgot where I was. I imagined myself once more in my little chamber, far from the temptations of the world; when a stifled laugh from behind roused me from my abstraction; and looking up, I saw Laura peeping over my shoulder.

"Well, little Aunt Mercy," cried she, "I am glad to see you so well employed. You must read a chapter for me, too, for I am too tired and sleepy to do it myself."

"Then you do read your Bible, Laura?" said I, eagerly. "I feared you would think it an unfashionable book."

"Yes, sometimes I do," answered she, carelessly; "but I don't know what good it does me, as I cannot understand it." Then perceiving me opening my lips, she continued—"Now, Fanny, do not begin to preach to me, for I cannot bear it. I sent for you, because, on such an occasion, I would not like to have you absent, and Mrs. Belmont desired it. But you must remember that you are among a very different set of people here from those you have been associated with; and if you do not wish to mortify me to death, you must lay aside your old-fashioned ways till you return. But one thing I must settle between us: there is to be no *preaching*, such as I was obliged to endure when Aunt Mercy came to see us."

"Oh! Laura," cried I, "what injustice you do to the character of Aunt Mercy. To me she seems more like an angel than a human being. She never forces religion upon you, but her whole life is a sermon; and she cannot breathe without diffusing around her an atmosphere of piety—"

Laura interrupted me by humming a gay tune; and unbraiding her long hair, she prepared for her nightly rest. I saw it was in vain to contend with such unconquerable levity; and in silence followed her example. But when I saw her lay her cheek on her pillow, without so much as bending her knee in prayer, I could not resist the impulse that threw me upon my knees by her side, and led me to exclaim—"Forgive me, my sister, but I dare not see thee court such unblest slumbers. Let us kneel together even as we have done when children, and pray the Almighty to overshadow us both with the wings of His love during the dark, midnight hour."

Laura raised herself on her elbow, and looked down upon me with unaffected surprise. Her countenance was moved for a moment; and as I watched her quivering lip, my heart palpitated with unutterable emotion. But as if ashamed of her transient sensibility she threw herself back with a faint laugh, and said, "you are the strangest girl I ever saw in my life. You may pray till you are as old as Methuselah if you like, but don't dis-

turb me any longer." Then closing her eyes, she pretended to be in a deep sleep, while I, still kneeling, gazed intently on her face, and thought with anguish, that the time *would* come when the high pulses of youthful pride would cease to beat in that rebellious heart, and the touch of death chill the warm roses of her cheek. "Oh! beautiful, but prayerless and ungodly sister," thought I, "in that hour where will thy spirit turn for consolation, and where will be its final home?" I shuddered and wept. I could not bear the overwhelming feelings that came over me. I rose, and, extinguishing the light, sat down in the moonlight till my soul became hushed to tranquillity, in the contemplation of the most beautiful and the most glorious of the Creator's works. Then it rose in rapture, as I gazed on the stars that girdled the heavens, as with a resplendent zone, and thought that all this matchless jewelry was but the dust of the Creator's dwelling-place. My spirit expanded with this sublime idea; and, taking in world after world in their revolving course, swelled with the consciousness of its own immortal powers, and soared higher and higher till it was lost in the abyss of Deity. But I must not linger too long on contemplative heights. I have some events to relate more interesting than my lonely musings, and I will hasten to Laura's bridal eve, passing over the intervening time, which was mostly employed in preparations for the event.

There was something bewildering to me in the novelty and brilliancy of the scene. I was astonished at my own magnificence, for Mrs. Belmont had presented me with a dress, similar to Laura's in the beauty of its texture, but made with such perfect simplicity, that Aunt Mercy herself could not have condemned it. She wreathed a garland of white roses in my hair, saying it was the only ornament she would ask me to wear, and that I could not refuse to adopt the emblem of innocence and youth. Laura looked so lovely, I wondered I had ever thought her handsome before; and as she leaned on her bridegroom's arm, a tall, fine looking young man, it was remarked by many, they had seldom seen a more interesting looking pair. He evidently loved my sister, and I believe she loved him with all the depth of feeling of which her nature was capable. I trembled when I heard the solemn words that bound them together till death should part, in the awful name of God. I remembered the divine guest of Cana, and sighed to reflect that He was banished from a festival, once sanctified by his presence, and glorified by a manifestation of miraculous power.

There was a brother of the bridegroom, Eustace Moreland, who came from a distant city to be present at the nuptials. His exterior reminded me of Aunt Mercy's description of the ill-fated Cleveland. He was pale and serious, and there was something in the thoughtful depths of his eye, and the soft, but manly tones of his voice that distinguished him from all present. Our mutual relation to the bride and bridegroom naturally drew

us together; and though at first I was too much oppressed with diffidence to enjoy his companionship, I soon gathered confidence in myself from the gentleness and deference of his manners. He had seen much of the world, and, probably, judging from my bashfulness and simplicity, that I had lived a hermit life, he sought to amuse me by describing its wonders and varieties. Then, as if he perceived through the veil of reserve, which was gradually lifting, some flashes of feeling and genius, he turned the conversation in another channel. He spoke of poetry and music in language that breathed of the eloquence of the one, and the sweetness of the other. Insensibly I forgot myself in listening to him, and uttered what nature and sensibility prompted. Surprised and delighted to find myself an object of almost exclusive attention to one who seemed so highly gifted, the evening glided away so unconsciously, I was startled when the company began to disperse. When alone, I found myself comparing the features, manners and conversation of my new friend, with the lover of Aunt Mercy; and when I remembered the impression her story had made on my mind, I trembled at the possibility of knowing from experience the truth of her vivid descriptions. Again the monitor within warned me that reflections like these were not the last that should linger in my mind before seeking that communion with God which I had learned to consider a privilege but little lower than the angels enjoy. "No!" said I, as I unbound the mimic roses from my brow, "let not the equanimity of my soul be lost. The days of bridal festivity will soon be over, and I shall return to the seclusion of my cottage. There every day I seemed drawing nearer and nearer to heaven, but here I feel I am but a child of earth. All around me whispers of vanity, and my own weak heart echoes back the sound."

Day after day passed away, and I was still associated with Eustace Moreland, in the morning ride and the evening walk. In twilight shades and moonlight hours, in scenes "where music breathed its balm," he was ever at my side, till I became accustomed to identify him with every thought of the present, and every dream of the future. His sentiments were so pure and lofty, he expressed such reverence for the Deity, such an admiration for his works, such aspirations after a higher and holier state of being, that I considered the delight I felt in his companionship but a homage to virtue and religion. So entire was my confidence in the strength of his religious principles, that I ventured to reveal to him the anguish I felt at Laura's disregard of all sacred things, and the interdiction I received from her whenever I endeavoured to rouse her to a sense of her danger and madness. He sympathized in my sorrow, and wondered how she could be insensible to the admonitions of a love so holy and disinterested. I described to him Aunt Mercy's evangelical character, and he listened with a reverence and attention which I thought nothing but religious awe could inspire. Ignorant of the world, incapable of deception, and willing

to be deceived, it is not strange that I was deluded; yet I knew not the depth of the delusion, till accident revealed the true character of him whom my imagination had exalted so high above his fellow mortals.

One evening, about twilight, I sat alone in a little room contiguous to the parlour, whither I had retired to write to Aunt Mercy. Mrs. Belmont called it her *boudoir*, and allowed, as she said, but a privileged few to enter it. It was separated from the parlour by folding doors; but in summer there were green damask curtains, which could be festooned back, or suffered to fall, at the will of the occupant of this tasteful apartment. The shades were gathering so fast, I could not see to continue my occupation; and laying aside my pen, I watched the prismatic hues of the clouds that lingered in the wake of the setting sun. Footsteps and voices in the adjoining room roused me from my reverie; and as soon as I discovered the tones of Eustace and his brother, I trembled with an undefinable apprehension of guilt in listening, though I could not summon confidence enough to emerge from my involuntary concealment.

"I never thought you a hypocrite before," said Horace Moreland, the husband of Laura, "but you now act the part of a most accomplished one."

"I would rather hear you *assert* than *insinuate*," Horace, as you have often done before," replied Eustace; "but if I am a hypocrite, I am an unconscious one."

"An unconscious one!" repeated Horace, laughing; "do you not know that Fanny Bellenden looks upon you as a second St. Paul, and that you are deceiving her little saintship by a show of religion, while your heart is a stranger to its influence? Laura says that Fanny believes you a male Aunt Mercy, and as such almost worships you."

Here I endeavoured to rise and escape; but my limbs were powerless from increasing agitation, and I was compelled to remain and listen to words which dispelled the brightest illusion that had ever irradiated my young existence.

"I fear I am doing wrong," replied Eustace, in an earnest tone, "but Heaven knows, without any premeditated deception. I know nothing about religion, I confess; but in the presence of Fanny Bellenden, I feel as if possessed of a purer and better nature than I have ever known before. And when she converses of holy themes, I find myself following her unawares, without knowing the path I am treading. My soul, like a dark stream on which the moonbeams fall, reflects the light of hers, but, unconscious as the waters of the source whence the illumination proceeds, it remains, like them, in shadow when the light is withdrawn."

"Always poetical, always on the stilts of sentiment," retorted his gay brother. "But I would seriously warn you against falling too deeply in love with this little Puritan. She is pretty, I grant, and there is a novelty about her that is her greatest fascination in your eyes; but when that wears off, you will find her but an insipid com-

panion. Depend upon it, you can never be happy with a woman whose greatest delight is in reading psalms and singing hymns, and who may turn your home into a conventicle. Laura and I harmonize delightfully. We are contented to enjoy the present without troubling ourselves about the future, and looking upon life as a fairy gift, we think we have a right to use it as we please. Take my advice, Eustace, and think not of marrying one so entirely uncongenial to yourself, and in common honesty do not sport with her feelings, or assume, to please her, the garb of sanctity and the language of priestcraft."

"I thank you for your counsel, brother," replied Eustace, in a cold proud tone; "but our views of domestic happiness are not exactly similar. It does not alarm me to think that the woman I love would turn with indifference or disgust from the voluptuousness of Moore, or the immorality of Bulwer. If she finds in the Bible a counter-charm to these dangerous authors, I would rather encourage her superstition than dispel it. I would never wish to break the delusion that has such a gentle, yet restraining influence on her character."

Here the brothers separated. Eustace walked into the garden and passed the window, where I was seated, but so shaded by the curtain, he did not perceive me, and so immovable did I remain, I must have resembled a statue more than a human being. I felt chilled to the heart's core. I had heard the faith delivered to the saints, and sealed by the blood of martyrdom, the truths for which an incarnate Deity had "bowed the heavens and come down," spoken of as *delusion*, by one whom my imagination had made but little lower than the angels. I had discovered that all the sublime and devotional sentiments he so eloquently breathed, were derived from such a frail being as myself, instead of that Being above all beings, whose attributes he professed to adore. So intense were my emotions, I forgot time and place. I scarcely was conscious that darkness was deepening around me, when Mrs. Belmont entering with a light, whose blinding rays streamed painfully upon me, reminded me of the strangeness of my situation.

"Bless me, Fanny," she exclaimed, "what is the matter with you? How pale you look! and your hand is as cold as ice."

I attempted to answer, but failing in the effort, burst into tears. Mrs. Belmont, in her own sweet, soothing manner, tried to restore me to composure; and believing me seriously ill, led me to my chamber, and lavished upon me a thousand cares. Ashamed of receiving attentions to which I thought I had no legitimate claim, I soon became outwardly tranquil, but it was the smoothness of the ice, while the current is rushing below. My resolution was formed, perhaps hastily, but I believe wisely. I determined to return to the guardianship of Aunt Mercy, where I could be once more safe from the storms of passion and the temptations of the world. I would never again be exposed to the mortification

of hearing my influence so depreciated by one, or the danger of knowing it to be too deeply felt by another; for between that other and me a barrier was placed, high as the heavens and deep as the foundations of life.

When I again met Eustace Moreland, I was surprised at the composure of my feelings. It was not an assumed calmness, smoothing the surface, such as I had at first been able to command, but it came from the depths of a soul conscious of capacities it had never known before. To love a being who bounded his views to this little island, while mine were reaching over the shoreless ocean in which it is placed, seemed a degradation to me. I could not love the man I did not reverence.—I could not reverence the man, who was willing to grovel in the dust of infidelity, while gifted with powers that could bear him up to heaven, yea, the heaven of heavens, unveiled in the Apocalyptic vision. I looked at his face, and thought its very beauty was changed,—for the glory with which my imagination had invested it, was departed. The change of my feelings was visible in my countenance and manner. He could not account for it. He sought by all the fascinations of which he was master, to recall the enthusiasm which had lately animated our intercourse, but it was fled. At length unable to deceive, and entreated again and again to tell the cause of my altered manners, I told him of the conversation to which I had been an unwilling listener. At first he appeared greatly distressed and embarrassed, but recovering himself, he said he rejoiced that I knew him exactly as he was, for the consciousness that I believed him purer and better than he was, had long lowered him in his own eyes. I will not repeat the warm and eloquent language he used to convince me, that exclusive devotion to me, would be sufficient to secure my happiness, without regard to devotion to God. I will not repeat his sacrilegious expressions of jealousy of the *Being* who rivalled him in my affections. Then he exalted my influence, and declared that I had power to mould him at will, and to make him a proselyte to that faith, he had hitherto viewed as the dream of an enthusiast. It is astonishing how dispassionately I could listen, how calmly I could answer; but when the soul is brought up to a solemn determination, it receives strength from on high to carry out its own high resolves. I had loved Eustace as only the young unsophisticated heart can love; but the moment I found myself deceived in his character, the moment he became an object of *pity*, the spell that bound my senses was broken, and the *idol* was disenthroned.

In proportion as his power declined, the influence of that religion, whose light had become a little dimmed by the breathings of the worldlings around me, increased, and strengthened, and brightened. I longed to return to Aunt Mercy, and made known my wish to Mrs. Belmont, who vehemently opposed it. She was a kind and hospitable lady, who having no children to cheer her in

her widowhood, and having an ample fortune, saw no better way of appropriating it than administering to the pleasures of others. Laura's beauty charmed her, and rendered the house attractive to the gay and fashionable. My simplicity pleased her, and she would gladly have retained me to fill the void Laura was about to make in her household. I was grateful for her kindness, but I was weary of the false splendour of her life. I felt something of that loneliness of spirit which oppressed the children of Israel when "by the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept; they wept when they remembered Zion."

When I parted from Laura, who was evidently more than tired of my companionship, and angry at my rejection of Eustace, I could not repress the feelings of nature, which I feared were deadened in my bosom. "Oh! Laura," I exclaimed, "you are happy now, and may live without God in the world; but should dark days come, that come sooner or later to all, and you look in vain for comfort and support, remember us, oh! my sister; remember those who love you, and pray for you, and will continue to do so as long as they live." Laura smiled, looked at her husband as if she thought they both possessed immortality on earth, and turned away from my gaze. Eustace Moreland lingered when all others had bidden farewell. His silent grief affected me more than all his previous eloquence. I felt something of the early fascination he had exercised, enthralling me once more. The thought that we were parting perhaps never to meet again; never, through all the rolling ages of eternity, was awful! Horrible doubts swept for a moment, like cold midnight shadows, over my soul. If there were indeed no hereafter; if the heaven aspiring spirit were but the breath that warmed and animated the moulded clay, which constitutes our frames; if the grave were indeed our only portion, what would avail the sacrifice of love on the altar of religion? How bitterly I wept at the recollection of these impious surmises when the dark hour had gone by! How steadfastly did I turn my back upon the tempter, and how firmly did I clasp to my bosom the buckler that can alone resist his fiery arrows.

When I approached the cottage, my heart bounded, as if it would burst from emotion. It was the same hour, as when I first drew near it. I saw the same solitary lamp, gleaming from the windows, through the snowy folds, that looked as if they had never been ruffled since my departure. What if Aunt Mercy were dead! My bounding pulses almost ceased to beat at the suggestion. My hasty steps paused on the threshold, and my hand trembled as I lifted the latch. There she sat in her easy chair, her knitting in her lap, her open bible lying on the table by her side, the undecaying fires of eternity still flashing from her deep dark eyes. She welcomed me, as Noah did the weary dove, when she found no rest for her foot on a deluged world.

"You return to me, my child," she cried, laying

her hand in blessing on my head, "to me, the aged and lonely; the grace of God has been sufficient for thee, for the strength to resist temptation cometh from above."

"I have indeed been tempted," said I, "but I am here, I am safe—I will never leave you more."

For the three succeeding months I continued to read, walk, and work, with Aunt Mercy, even as I had done before; but when the snows of winter drifted round the cottage, she no longer ventured abroad. Suddenly her limbs became palsied, and she was confined to her own room. During this time, I had heard but once from Laura, who boasted of her continued happiness, and laughed to scorn my predictions of darker days.

"You were a fool," she added, "to slight such a man as Eustace Moreland, but you need not think you have broken his heart, for since your departure he has been the gayest of the gay."

I lifted up my heart in silent gratitude to Heaven, that I had not endangered my everlasting peace, by yielding to the blandishments of one, whose love could pass so lightly away. Day after day Aunt Mercy's strength gradually declined. She could no longer leave her bed, and her palsied hands lay idly by her side. One night I sat by her, watching every breath she drew, fearing it might be her last. It was a tempestuous, gloomy night,—the wind rattled against the windows, and howled through the naked branches of the elms, with such a dismal, wailing sound, I shuddered to hear it. Imagination converted it into Aunt Mercy's funeral knell, and as I gazed upon her pale and sunken features, and thought I soon should be alone in the world, I remembered my father, and prayed the God of the mariner to keep him from shipwrecks and death, and bear him home in safety over the storm-lashed billows.

Towards midnight she seemed to revive, and calling me closer to her, bid me pass my arm beneath her head, that she might speak with less difficulty.

"Fanny," she said, "my Master is coming. He cometh on the wings of the wind. I am travelling through the deep waters, but I am not dismayed; I see from afar the green borders of the promised land. I see the shining ones walking the banks to meet me. I hear the rustling of their glorious wings." Her eyes closed with a smile, and she slumbered gently on my arm; then again arousing, she looked at me with unutterable solemnity. "I feel drawn back to earth once more," she said, "for I cannot take you with me—oh! my darling child, you know not how tender is the love of the dying. You have been to me a precious comforter. Even as Ruth clave to Naomi, hast thou cleaved unto me; and may my God be thy God, and the people of God thy friends. He who gave thee strength to resist an unhallowed love will never leave nor forsake thee. He will bless thee; He will bless thee;" continued she in a fainter voice, and once more the chamber was still as the grave. The gray shadows of death gath-

thered coldly over her face, her head pressed heavily and more heavily on my arm, her features grew fixed and rigid, and still I moved not, but kept my eyes fastened on her brow, and my right hand clasped in her chill and powerless one, and it seemed to me I should never move again. I felt that I was upon the awful boundary line that divides time from eternity. The secrets of the invisible world seemed unveiled to my vision. I, too, seemed to have left my body of dust, and was ascending in the wake of Aunt Mercy's glorified spirit. Like the prophet of Israel, when he caught the mantle of inspiration from Elijah, as the burning wheels rolled upward, and exclaimed, "My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" my spirit's glance beheld the magnificent retinue of heaven, attending the newborn seraph on her way. How long I remained in this blissful trance I know not. The sound of carriage wheels driven hastily to the door first startled me. A loud, reiterated knocking alarmed me still more. Such a sudden tumult, contrasting with the silence of night and the stillness of death, was fearful. A servant descended and admitted the unexpected visitor. It was Eustace Moreland, alone, at the dead of night, thus disturbing the most awful, the most sacred moments of my existence. "Surely," thought I, "he comes on some dreadful errand. But the cup that my heavenly Father giveth me, shall I not drain?"

"Bid him come up hither," said I, to the weeping attendant, "I cannot leave the dead." I heard his step upon the stairs, I saw him enter the chamber, but I did not, could not move. His face was pale as marble, his hair disordered, his whole appearance indicated hurry and grief. He stopped, as though struck with horror, at the ghastly figure extended on the bed, then approaching me, he endeavoured to liberate my hand from the icy clasp of the dead.

"Oh, Fanny!" he exclaimed, "what a meeting is this! My poor, unfortunate brother! your unhappy sister! this bed of death!"

"My sister," was all I could utter. A deadly sickness came over me, and my head sunk on the cold bosom of Aunt Mercy. Eustace drew my arm gently away from the neck of her, who was no longer conscious of the caresses of affection, and raised me from my melancholy position.

"We are both mourners," cried he, in a faltering voice; "let sorrow once more unite our hearts. My brother is no more. He died by the hand of violence." Here covering his brow with his hand, his frame shook with repressed emotion.

"And Laura?" asked I, expecting to hear the consummation of horror.

"Laura," replied he, "is the most wretched of human beings. In the wild ravings of agony she calls for you. She prays you to hasten to her and save her, if you can, from madness and despair."

"She lives, then!" I cried, lifting up my hands in gratitude to Heaven; and the thought, that Laura, arrested in her thoughtless career of vanity

and folly, by the mighty hand of God, might yet be brought, with the humility of a broken and contrite spirit, to declare the punishment was just, and that Eustace, too, smitten by the same chastening power, would turn from the dim shadow of philosophy, and embrace the sublime realities of religion, so melted me, that I wept, and found a consolation in my tears.

Eustace remained till the ashes of Aunt Mercy were laid in kindred dust. Long before she died, she had marked the spot for her grave. It was beneath the elm tree, in the soil that had drunk the blood of Cleveland, and her own bitter tears. The cold white snow, whose emblematic purity she loved, covered her grave; while the tree, loaded with wintry icicles, bent mournfully and bleakly over it. After the funeral rites were over, I lingered behind; and, kneeling on the chill ground, as the ancient Hebrews prayed to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, I implored the God of Aunt Mercy to strengthen and direct me. I thought I was alone, but Eustace was near; and kneeling by my side, evinced by that silent, but expressive act, a sympathy too deep and hallowed for words. "She is not dead, but sleepeth," cried I, as we rose together, and turned sadly homeward. "Aunt Mercy will rise again."

The last duties being performed to the dead, I hastened to comply with the request of the living. During our rapid journey, I learned the particulars of the sad catastrophe. A dispute which commenced at the gaming table, under the excitement of wine, terminated in a duel; and Horace was brought home weltering in his blood, to his wife and brother, who were entirely unconscious of the fatal transaction. The wound being in the head, caused the most excruciating and protracted sufferings, and he died in agonies that baffled description. Laura, who had passionately loved her husband, was in such a state of frenzy at his loss, and the dreadful circumstances that accompanied it, that no one dared to comfort her. Even Mrs. Belmont turned away, for kind and affectionate as she was, she could offer no antidote for grief like Laura's. I was appalled when I first beheld her, so changed did she look from the late bright and blooming bride. Her wild and blood-shot eyes, from which no tear had yet fallen, turned despairingly towards me, while her dry and quivering lips vainly endeavoured to articulate my name. Her hair, which had always been remarkable for its profusion, and which she had torn in the impotence of her grief, fell in damp, heavy masses over her colourless cheek, and her pale hands were clenched together with the palms thrown outwards, that gesture of all others most expressive of anguish.

"You told me it would come," at length she shrieked; "you told me the dark hour would come. Where is the comfort you promised? comfort me, or I die!"

Unhappy Laura! how my heart bled for her. Where was now the blithe and haughty spirit that

had resisted my prayers and my tears, and made a mockery and scorn of those consolations she now vainly sought? Oh! if Christianity were indeed a fable, and the Christian and the infidel discovered, when they met on the brink of the grave, they had the same portion of darkness and annihilation, it would still be worth thrones and principalities and powers, for the sustaining influence it gives in sorrow and death. I will not dwell on the long and dreary days that succeeded to the paroxysms of maniac grief; nor describe the interviews with Eustace Moreland, that occasionally gilded their gloom; for were I to do so, this sketch would become a volume; but wishing to illumine these somewhat dark pages with some bright and lovely tints, I will pass on to another scene in the drama of my life. The events of years may be gathered from the simple outline presented to the view.

It was a lovely day in early autumn, before "decay's effacing fingers" had touched one hue of beauty, or dimmed one ray of glory, which adorned or brightened the face of nature. It was a lovely Sabbath-day, and the city's myriad spires glistening in the sunbeams, and the city's deep-toned bells mingling in solemn harmony, told that man was not forgetful of the commands of his Maker, but remembered the Sabbath-day and hallowed it. I walked to the sound of those sweet and solemn bells, towards one of those sun-gilded domes. I entered the church where a crowded audience were gathered to listen to an eloquence, which was said to surpass that of the sons of men. A lady and

gentleman sat on either side of me. The lady was young and lovely, but she was very pale, and dressed in the deepest mourning; and her mild, dark eye had a pensive, subdued expression, that spoke of chastened sorrows, and early blighted hopes. The gentleman looked weather-beaten and brown, and his mien was that of a man who had been accustomed to tread the reeling deck. It was my father, escaped from perils on sea, and who now shared the home of his widowed daughter, on whose face the second beatitude was now stamped in heavenly characters. Mrs. Belmont also sat near, who had not witnessed unmoved or unblest, the process of Laura's moral regeneration.

When the majestic notes of the organ died away on the ear, the minister arose, and every eye was bent on his face. His cheek was at first pale, but it soon glowed with the fervour of his feelings. His voice was at first low, but it swelled with the inspiration of his soul; and as his dark, serious eye swept over the throng, it seemed to kindle where it beamed. I thought that eye sometimes rested on me, as if there was one present dearer than all the rest, and I bowed my head, fearing that some feelings of human pride mingled with the joy and gratitude that pervaded my being. It was Eustace Moreland. It was my husband, who presided over that almost breathless congregation, and ministered unto them the words of eternal life. Unworthy of a felicity, transcending the destiny of woman, I can only raise my heart to heaven, and exclaim, "Bless the Lord, oh! my soul, and all that is within me, bless and praise His holy name!"

Original.

# FITZ POWYS AND THE NUN;

OR, DIPLOMACY IN HIGH LIFE.

BY NATHANIEL P. WILLIS.

SOME half dozen years ago, Mrs. Wilfrid Lefevre, a widow with marriageable daughters, suddenly rose like a meteor into the thin air of London fashion. Her first party was a faultless combination, and her subsequent parties went on—not by ascending gradations, for there was no choicer company, no better music, nor more admirable disposition of light, supper and decoration, to be attained this side of Paradise, or Paris—but they were equal to the first, and the fickle *beau-monde* remained constant. Of the small number in high society who owed their position exclusively to superiority of style, Mrs. Lefevre was, in 1836, the indisputable star dominant. She vanished from her high orbit at the close of the season, having brilliantly married all her daughters! And her Napoleonic genius, more particularly in this latter field of strategy, remains to this day the sphinx riddle to the managing mothers of May Fair.

The patriotism of ladies in no country ever required stimulus; but it may add “a rose leaf to the brimming cup” of American female patriotism to mark the difference between the situation of marriageable girls in England, and marriageable girls in the United States. The difference is almost told when we stop to explain why it should be a marvel that Mrs. Lefevre married all her daughters; but a marvel it certainly was, highly accomplished, beautiful and stylish as were the Misses Lefevre, without exception.

In our country every young man means to marry, and unless his abilities are very inferior, he is able at twenty-five, or sooner, to offer the lady of his choice a comfortable home. It is not the fashion, moreover, (and this is *very* wonderful to Europeans) for the lover to make any direct inquiries as to the lady's worldly substance, or to exact any thing whatever beyond the *limpida camisa* in which she blushes into matrimony. The result is that *all* American ladies have a chance to marry, and most of them a “considerable sprinkle” of variety in choice, their success in winning the right one depending entirely on their own intrinsic qualities and attractions. From the liberal freedom of intercourse allowed between young people, (the most mark'd peculiarity of our national manners, by the way,) the dissimilarities of temper which breed repentance in wedlock are unstarched in time, and an American husband or wife has no apology for the discovery of flaws *post-matrimonial*.

*Audi alteram partem.* Of the young men, say fifty, who are on the visiting list of a family of nice girls in England, not more than five or six are, or ever will be, good matches in point of fortune, and the remainder are not to be thought of, however agreeable—partly because the parents would oppose, and partly (a very essential “partly”) because the young gentlemen, doomed to a

limited income, are as much resolved not to marry except to better their condition, as the young ladies; and meantime are not at all forlorn as irresponsible bachelors. The five or six “matches” are also “sore beset” by hundreds of other nice girls, (or by their mammas for them,) and as “rich and noble means not, of course, gifted and wise,” the winner is not always as much a subject of envy as she seems. With the forty-five unmarried beaux mademoiselle may dance and chat, (properly chaperoned) but to venture upon the outermost limit of sentiment or flirtation, except to pique a marrying man, or hide a mortification, would be unpardonable indiscretion. The natural result is, that if a man is not “a match,” he finds unmarried girls very unamusing, and married ladies are so willing to supply the deficiency that he seldom speaks to a Miss, except it is his sister or cousin, or some quite safe old maid, very useful or very literary. The changes in civilization, moreover, while they furnish no amelioration of female celibacy, tend continually (by the perfection of clubs, usages of hospitality, depreciation of married reserve, etc.) to embellish and make more attractive the life of a “bachelor,” added to which the name has ceased to be a reproach, while that of “old maid” has not, and there is a very common feeling in society that a man is not justified in marrying except with a certainty of competence—marriage not being an engagement “for better or worse,” but for *better* only. The chances are at least ten to one that an English girl never receives a plausible offer, fifty to one she never marries, and a hundred to one she does not marry the man she would have chosen, fortune aside. With this contrast, are we wrong in pronouncing America the paradise of young ladies? This by way of digression.

And now for a story which will prove that there is no place like the heart of London for a mystery.

The sun was apparently dropping into its suburban lodging at Bayswater, and the ring in Hyde Park was deserted by all except the *recherchts* who flit with the bats by twilight. Lady Sylvia Tronor hated a crowd even in Rotten Row,\* and usually ordered her chariot for a turn in the Park at the hour when the impertinence of daylight became less intrusive. Her dashing blood greys, not the less scornfully superb because pampered for dew and dusk, had hardly spattered the gravel once round upon the pedestrians in the circle, when the primrose-gloved hand of the best mounted man in London was laid upon her chariot window. The perpendicular coachman instantly moderated his pace, and the equally intelligent animal ridden by Mr. Fitz Herbert Powys (trained, among other accomplishments for chit-chat at carriage windows) took care of his legs and his master's, and incorporated his momentum into that of her Ladyship's equipage as completely as the flying griffin upon the panel.

“How d'ye do, Fitz?”

“How d'ye do?—just come?”

“Before I forget it, what do you do with yourself to-night?”

\* The fashionable segment of the Ring in Hyde Park.

"Sulk at home, unless you are to be alone. What's going? I'm so sick of every thing?"

Lady Sylvia handed him an unsealed note.

"From the Lefevres, and you *must* go," said the little beauty, very positively.

"Isn't that the woman with a dozen daughters to marry? Really I can't. What's one to say to so many stuck up girls, and I'm never let alone, you know! Besides, if one wanted to air one's heels, it's Wednesday, the Duke's ball."

"Well, don't put on that imploring air. There will be the Duke's balls 'till doomsday—"

"If doomsday come on a Wednesday!" interrupted the dandy.

"Poh! listen! These Lefevres are worth going to, my dear Fitz! Nothing was ever so perfect as their parties—nothing was ever seen like their toilettes—no-body knows where they got their music—no money can buy such flowers—it's witch-work, the *style* of the people. Go you shall! Dine with me at nine."

"Sir Thomas?"

"Sir Thomas dines out."

"*Convenu!* Adieu!"

Mr. Fitz Herbert Powys had been of age and the possessor of an enormous fortune just a year. Up to this time he had been carefully kept upon moderate means at foreign Universities, and was well educated, good looking, and good tempered. His family being very respectable, there was nothing to qualify the fact that he was the best match of the season. His life was of course an amatory gauntlet. His past life, his tastes, his weak points, his resorts, and his opinions were, to Misses and Mammias, surprizingly familiar. From feeling flattered with all this, however, he had now got to fancy he was rather hunted; and, in truth, Powys found it so much more agreeable to accept the more disinterested attentions of married belles, that his case was rapidly degenerating into a chronic Missyphobia. With his four-in-hand, his great popularity at the clubs, his seeming endless facility of making favor with brilliant women, and a superb establishment in Park Lane, the chance of his sighing for a change in his condition seemed desperato indeed.

As a supplement to this sketch of Fitz Powys, I may as well quote a remark of Mrs. Lefevre's, made just a week before the period at which he is introduced to the reader. This quiet person had, unobserved, listened for an hour to his conversation with Lady Sylvia at the last Almack's.

"Well, what is he like?" asked her daughter, Melicent, who had not yet made her appearance in London society.

"Like a child stuffed with *bons-bons*, a longing for a piece of bread, my love! His humors are all surfeited, and his heart starving for a bit of romance or nature. *D'ailleurs*, a very proper match for you!"

The weather seemed in the conspiracy to embellish the Lefevres' ball, and the Regent's Park, in the soft moonlight, looked, from the rapidly whirling carriages, like a vision of restored Italy. In the vicinity of the gay scene, the coachmen, ranged along the park palings,

leaned with their elbows upon the hammer-cloths, watching the swans floating in the sward-rimmed and moon-lit water; the footmen were crowded about the door, feasting their profane eyes with glimpses of satin slippers tripping across the carpeted sidewalk; heavenly music poured into the street from the open verandahs, and for half a mile, either way, extended a line of night-capped heads from the upper stories, the tender hearts of the neighbors' house-maids (of the same sex as the noble dames and damsels at the ball, though it requires some reflection to realize it) throbbing upon the window sills in sleepless sympathy.

Lady Sylvia was late. The beauty of the night had tempted her to come from Belgrave Square by the way of Hampstead—Mr. Fitz Powys having on him a tertian of romance to which he was subject.

"Tell Mrs. Lefevre's people not to announce me," said her Ladyship to her footman before alighting, and so entering quietly on Powys' arm, she avoided the reception room, and mingled with the dancers on the floor.

"After this waltz," said Powys, "I shall stalk round and see the rooms, and then find some of the fellows and go to supper. Don't introduce me to Mrs. Le—what's-her-name, unless we break our necks over her, and the Misses if you love me! What divine music, to be sure!" he added, as he encircled the round waist of Lady Sylvia, and fled away in the waltz.

The house occupied by the Lefevres was one of the most spacious in London, having been built by the eccentric Lord ———, who was afterwards confined in it as a madman. Accustomed as Powys was to splendor, he wandered around in admiring astonishment. The number of the rooms seemed endless, and the arrangement a labyrinth, yet there were just persons enough without a crowd, and no one seemed unoccupied or unamused. Of the larger rooms, the walls were covered with plaited linon, dazzlingly white, and overlaid with gilded arabesque, knotted with bouquets of natural flowers, camellias and water-lilies predominating. There were no doors visible, but the gorgeous boudoirs, hither and thither, showed each a double mirror of the height of the ceiling, set in silk, or swung upon an unseen hingo, (mirrors to those within and to those without) and closed at pleasure by the pressure of the finger, leaving the existence of the retreat unsuspected.

Powys' acquaintance with the guests was nearly universal, but having made up his mind to "do" the party as expeditiously as possible, he nodded right and left and kept on his way; yet he began to think, after a while, that "a glamour" was thrown over his eyes, for in every successive room he immediately singled out a lady of singular superiority of style and countenance, and on inquiring her name heard immediately the same reply, "Miss Lefevre." Dressed in totally different styles, so much so at least as to disguise any family resemblance that might exist, they were, each, the most striking ornament of the apartment that seemed to be allotted to her care; and though in the exercise of the vicegerence of hospitality, every successive Miss Lefevre passed her eye over Mr. Powys with a very perceptible

recognition, that he was aware by an influence he could scarcely explain, that his presence was without its usual effect upon their Missyships, and that he had just as much ice to break in making their acquaintance as a "detrimental" with £200 a year.

Piqued and out of humor at this refusal of his usual tribute, (indifferent as he really was to it when paid) Powys turned towards a conservatory, which, not being lit, did not seem intended to be thrown open to the company, but the glass door of which was set ajar by Miss Lefevre at his approach, probably for fresh air. It was of a crescent shape, and filled with delicious flowers; and soothed with its fragrance and coolness, the discontented millionaire followed its course, till the shining rooms he had left were out of sight, and he stood alone with the moon shining in upon him through the roof of glass. The sudden interruption of the music of the band made him aware at this moment that the door behind him had been closed again, and with a renewed feeling of pique at the implied inattention of Miss Lefevre, who had seen him enter, he turned to retrace his steps.

"Fitz!" suddenly cried a shrill voice from the other direction. "Fitz! Fitz!"

Powys started. Could the conservatory lead round again to the ball-room? Who was calling him? Not Lady Sylvia's voice, surely!

"Fitz! Fitz!" called the strange voice with a more impatient emphasis.

The light of the moon just sufficed to show the alley of flowers leading into the darkness, and expecting presently to emerge in the supper room or some lighted portion of the house, Powys turned towards the voice, which, with strange iteration in the same shrowish key, tempted him onward. Stumbling over the raised threshold of a small vestibule, he now saw a light gleaming through the slight opening of a door before him, and from the room beyond the cell evidently proceeded. Using no ceremony, he pushed the door inward—remarkable that though it moved upon a noiseless and easy hinge, it was unusually massive—and found himself in an apartment which seemed at the first glance to be a chapel.

"Fitz! Fitz!" screamed the voice again directly over his head. He had barely discovered that it was a caged parrot which was calling to him so lustily, when, in the deep embrasure of a window opposite he observed a female bustled in opening a shutter. As she succeeded in turning a heavy bolt, the opened window let in a rush of air, and the door by which he had entered was shut with a loud reverberation. The window he observed with surprise, also, was grated, and with a smile on his face at the aspect of adventure which every thing seemed to wear, he advanced to the female who, apparently unaware of his presence, stood looking out upon the night through the bars of the grating.

A scream of dismay followed the first word he uttered, and Powys beheld, with amazement, a face turned to him folded in the close-fitting coil of a nun, yet of a beauty in the highest degree impressive and striking.

"Who are you!" she demanded in a voice husky

with terror, but at the same time drawing up her lofty person to its fullest height.

With utterance scarcely more assured than her own, Powys began his apology, and aided by the parrot who broke in with the shrill repetition of his name, was in the midst of an embarrassed account of his travels through the dark, when the incognita sprang to the massive door, beat upon it with her hands, uttered cries of rage and terror, and finally fell upon her knees before the altar crowned with a crucifix, and buried her face in her hands in a paroxysm of distress.

Powys now began to fancy he had intruded upon the prison of a maniac, and crossed to re-open the door, but here again he was at fault, for it presented a solid surface of oak without handle or aperture, and had evidently closed with a spring-lock at the gust which followed the opening of the shutter. Through a smaller door at the extremity of the room, he saw the head of a narrow, white bed, with a crucifix against the wall above it, but delicacy forbade him to seek an exit there, and he stood still in fixed and silent embarrassment.

The lady rose. Tears glistened upon her long lashes, but her lip was curled with pride and resentment. There was no madness, Powys thought, in those glorious eyes, and looking at a clock which stood opposite the altar, she said, with a gesture of impatience, "Take a seat, sir; I regret to say you are a prisoner in this room till morning. Fatal—fatal chance!"—and again she buried her face in her hands and turned away to conceal her passionate emotion."

Powys thought he never had beheld a more exquisite form than that which now moved from him. The dress of spotless white was fitted simply and closely to a bust of the youthful mould, and divine outline of a Hebe, and the contour of the whole figure and the singular flow and dignity of her movement, kindled an admiration which for the moment overpowered his surprise. In that interval of silence he observed also, that, though furnished as a chapel with oratory and altar, the room contained a harp, implements of drawing, flowers, and other signs of constant female habitation.

"Fitz! Fitz!" screamed the parrot at this inopportune and delicate crisis.

Powys bit his lips. The lady looked round at the bird with a glance of vexation, and encountered the half-mirthful gaze of the intruder. She colored angrily for an instant, but Powys's sense of the ludicrous getting the better of his gravity, he burst into a violent fit of laughter, and with the tears still in her eyes, the offended nun hysterically followed him.

Evidently enraged at the turn things had taken, she made several attempts to control her own mirth and silence that of her companion. But with the first word of allusion to their imprisonment, the picture of their situation provoked a renewal of laughter on the part of Powys, and it was too contagious to resist. They were now seated, *vis-a-vis*, in two comfortable *fauteuils*, however, and a common sympathy, involuntary as it was, had done much to remove the awkwardness of their position. Powys's good breeding came to his aid, and

with his gravity, returned the somewhat romantic sense of the lady's unparalleled loveliness.

"It is very unfortunate," said she, with the least possible mischief trembling in the bright corner of her mouth, "that the husband of my German maid should answer to a name so nearly resembling your own. The parrot's lesson was "Fritz," but as the r troubled him he learned it with a variation."

Powys smiled, but ventured upon the natural gallantry of calling the circumstance any thing but a misfortune. Respectful as his manner was, however, he had driven the nun back again upon the reserve, and it was with very brief and reluctant narration that she explained the mystery of her own seclusion in London. She had been permitted (so ran her story) by the Abbess of the convent of ——— in Germany, in which she was destined to pass her life, to spend the closing year of her novitiate with her mother in England.

"And how much yet remains?—pardon me!" interrupted Powys, coloring, and checking himself at the eagerness of his own voice.

"A month. I am to take the black veil in August. The peculiar construction of this house, with the addition made for the confinement of the insane Lord ———, favored my mother's pledge of complete seclusion for me during this indulgence, and till this fated evening, it has seemed to me as far from the world as the cell of my convent. My mother and sisters, and the German maid who accompanied me, alone enter here."

A discreet question or two elicited the further information that the door (usually closed after the vesper hour, and opening only from the outside) had been left open by her sister that she might hear some of the new music of the band, and that Mr. Powys' liberation depended solely on the hour at which the said German maid should appear with the novice's breakfast. With the dissipation of a ball in the house, this promised un- luckily to be later than usual.

Apparently quite reconciled to his share of the vigil, Powys took a volume of German poetry from the table, on the blank leaf of which he observed the name of "Melicent," and with his continental education, soon found topics upon which conversation flowed very freely. His companion was as well read in German poetry and legend as himself, and with an exchange of enthusiasm on this and similar topics, the reserve of sister Melicent and the remaining hours of the night wore away with equal rapidity.

Morning dawned, and the nun betook herself to her matins. In adoration (perhaps more abstracted than her own) Powys watched her graceful figure kneeling in the oaken oratory, and listened to the low murmur of her voice. Her devotions had not power to calm the troubled flush upon her cheek, and with a beauty more radiant than saint's, the fair Melicent arose and let in the gold beam of the rising sun. And for the first time in the history of that luminary (as far as we are informed) its chaste dawn looked upon a declaration of love.

It was an exquisite band with which the sorely tempted novice crossed herself, calling on the saints to preserve

her in this unexpected strait, but the simplicity of a conventual education not having supplied the art of gradually yielding to a lover, and the saints not appearing at the summons as she had been taught to believe they would do, bodily, this lily-white hand lay imprisoned in Fitz Powys's, with no mortal means of extrication. Doubtless, with time to rally, the beleaguered nun would remember how she might have resisted, but it was not so ordained. Unexpectedly as old Bertha arrived at ten o'clock with muffins and coffee, the lovers had still found time to arrange a little surprize for the West End of London.

"*Gott in Himmel!*" exclaimed the faithful German as she opened the door of the sanctuary and dropped the coffee tray in her astonishment. The gliding nun, however, quietly slipped between Bertha and the door, and cut off the chance of a too precipitate retreat, and when the muffin and *et ceteras* were re-gathered, it was explained to the slow comprehension of the lay sister that her mistress "would not be a nun!" Gold spectacles were not wanting to aid Bertha's imperfect vision, and she ended by seeing the expediency of letting Mr. Powys out by the garden gate, and of following him, with the novice, out of the same gate, just twelve hours after.

Among those who were surprised with the return of Mr. and Mrs. Fitz Powys from Gretna Green, was Lady Sylvia Trenor, but *not* among the surprised were Mrs. Lefevre and her daughters. Powys had only one surprise during the honey-moon—that of discovering that old Bertha had no husband whose name was Fritz, and that the parrot was the exclusive property of Mrs. Lefevre! Not of a very inquisitive nature he never enquired how it came to be taught the first syllable of his aristocratic prenomem. What matter was it? He had got a beautiful and highly educated wife by the means, though *very possibly indeed*, but for the singular combination of circumstances on the night of her mamma's ball, she might never have been the controller of a millionaire's million—a better sphere for a pretty woman than a cell in a nunnery, to be sure!

With so much to manage in a single season, Mrs. Lefevre had of course no leisure for forming intimacies, and it was even said that, except on the occasion of her brilliant balls, nothing but a visiting card ever found admission into her door. It was enough for the gay world to know that the *entree* was desirable enough when she chose to accord it, and that she had been introduced to the leaders of fashion by very high sponsors. When Mrs. Lefevre disappeared, therefore, at the close of the season, and her whoremabout was not even surmised by the Court Journal, no thought was given to the matter, and there was no bereaved intimate friend to take to heart the mystification. Of what family the Lefevres were, and what their dowries were, it was presumed by the inquisitive that the six husbands had taken pains to ascertain—yet no whisper, on either of these points, reached, at the time, the avid ear of rumor.

In '39, three years after these events, a certain gay continental sovereign was in England, under a strict *incognito*, and as simple Monsieur ———, passed his time exclusively among the *ci-devant* six Misses Lefevre.

vre. His striking resemblance to every one of them, in a greater or less degree, provoked some curiosity among the diplomats, and it is now believed, by Lady Sylvia, for one, (who, by the way, has resumed her confidential friendship with Mr. Powys,) that these young ladies were a detachment from a very large family, (with several mothers) of royal lineage on one side only! To which of these demi-princesses Mrs. Lefevre was the natural parent, or whether she bore this relation to either of them, is, perhaps, to themselves, matter of doubt; but whether a frail favorite in her *decadence*, or a diplomatic agent only in the matter, she certainly acquitted herself with a felicity worthy of a white stone in history.

## FLIRTATION AND FOX-CHASING.

BY N. P. WILLIS.

"The only heart that I have known of late, has been an easy, excitable sort of gentleman, quickly roused and quickly calmed—sensitive enough to confer a great deal of pleasure, and not sensitive enough to give a moment's pain. The heart of other days was a very different person indeed."—BULWER.

I WAS moping one day in solitary confinement in quarantine at Malta, when, in a turn between my stone window and the back wall I saw the yards of a vessel suddenly cross the light, and heard the next moment the rattle of a chain let go, and all the bustle of a merchantman coming to anchor. I had the privilege of promenading between two ring-bolts on the wharf below the lazaretto, and with the attraction of a newcomer to the sleepy company of vessels under the yellow flag, I lost no time in descending the stone stairs, and was immediately joined by my vigilant sentinel, the *guardiano*, whose business it was to prevent my contact with the other visitors to the wharf. The *tricolor* flew at the peak of the stranger, and we easily made out that she was a merchantman from Marseilles, subject therefore to a week's quarantine on account of the cholera. I had myself come from a plague port, Smyrna, and was subjected to twenty days quarantine, six of which had passed; so that the Frenchman, though but beginning his imprisonment, was in a position comparatively enviable.

I had watched for an hour the getting of the vessel into mooring trim, and was beginning to conclude that she had come without passengers, when a gentleman made his appearance on deck, and the jolly-boat was immediately lowered and manned. A traveller's baggage was handed over the side, the gentleman took leave of the captain, and, in obedience to directions from the quarantine officer on the quarterdeck, the boat was pulled directly to the wharf on which I stood. The *guardiano* gave me a caution to retire a little, as the stranger was coming to take possession of the next apartment to my own, and must land at the stairs near by; but, before I had taken two steps backward, I began to recognise features familiar to me, and with a turn of the head as he sprang on the wharf the identity was established completely. Tom Berryman, by all that was wonderful! I had not seen him since we were suspended from college together ten years before. Forgetting *lazaretto* and *guardiano*, and all the salt water between New Haven and Malta, I rushed up to Tom with the cordiality of other days, (a little sharpened by abstinence from society,) and we still had hold of hands with a firm grip, when the quarantine master gravely accosted us, and informed my friend that he had incurred an additional week by

touching me—in short, that he must partake of the remainder of my quarantine.

Aghast and chap-fallen as Berryman was at the consequences of our rencontre, (for he had fully calculated on getting into Malta in time for the carnival,) he was somewhat reconciled to his lot by being permitted to share my room and table instead of living his week in solitude; and, by enriching our supplies a little from town, sleeping much, and chatting through the day in the rich sunshine of that climate of Paradise, we contrived to shove off the fortnight without any very intolerable tedium.

My friend and I had begun our travels differently—he taking England first, which I proposed visiting last. It is of course the *bonne bouche* of travel to everybody, and I was very curious to know Tom's experiences; and, as I was soon bound thitherward, anxious to pick out of his descriptions some chart of the rocks and shoals in the "British channel" of society.

I should say, before quoting my friend, that he was a Kentuckian, with the manner (to ladies) of mingled devotion and nonchalance so popular with the sex, and a chivalric quality of man altogether. His father's political influence had obtained for him personal letters of introduction from the President, and, with this advantage, and his natural air of fashion, he had found no obstacle to choosing his society in England; choosing the first, of course, like a true republican!

We were sitting on the water-steps with our feet immersed up to the ankles, (in January too,) and in reply to some question of mine as to the approachability of noble ladies by such plebeian lovers as himself, Tom told me the story which follows. I take the names at random, of course, but, in all else, I shall try to "tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

Why, circumstances, as you know, sometimes put people in the attitude of lovers whether they will or no; and it is but civil in such a case, to do what fate expects of you. I knew too much of the difference between crockery and porcelain to enter English society with the remotest idea of making love within the red book of the peerage, and though I've a story to tell, I swear I never put a foot forward till I thought it was knightly devoir; inevitable, though ever so ridiculous. Still, I must

with a beautiful and unreserved woman beside one, very much like other beautiful and unreserved women, a republican might be pardoned for forgetting the invisible wall. "Right honourable" loveliness has as much attraction about it, let me tell you, and is quite as difficult to resist, as loveliness that is honoured, right or wrong, and a man must be brought up to it, as Englishmen are, to see the heraldic dragons and griffins in the air when a charming girl is talking to him.

"Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like (*her*) grandsire cut in alabaster?"

Eh?

But to begin with the "Tityre tu patulae."

I had been passing a fortnight at the hunting lodge of that wild devil, Lord —, in the Scotch Highlands, and what with being freely wet outside every day, and freely wet inside every night, I had given my principle of life rather a disgust to its lodgings, and there were some symptoms of preparation for leave-taking. Unwilling to be ill in a bachelor's den, with no solace tenderer than a dandy lord's tiger, I made a twilight flit to the nearest post-town, and tightening my life-screws a little with the aid of the village apothecary, started southward the next morning with four posters.

I expected to be obliged to pull up at Edinboro', but the doctor's opiates, and abstinence, and quiet did more for me than I had hoped, and I went on very comfortably to Carlisle. I arrived at this place after nightfall, and found the taverns overflowing with the crowds of a fair, and no bed to be had unless I could make one in a quartette of snoring graziers. At the same time there was a great political meeting at Edinboro', and every leg of a poster had gone north—those I had brought with me having been trans-hitched to a return chaise, and gone off while I was looking for accommodations.

Regularly stranded, I sat down by the tap-room fire, and was mourning my disaster, when the horn of the night-coach reached my ear, and in the minute of its rattling up to the door, I hastily resolved that it was the least of two evils, and booked myself accordingly. There was but one vacant place, an outsider! With hardly time enough to resolve, and none to repent, I was presently rolling over the dark road, chilled to the bone in the first five minutes, and wet through with a "Scotch mist" in the next half hour. Somewhere about day-break we rolled into the little town of —, five miles from the seat of the Earl of Tresethen, to whose hospitalities I stood invited, and I went to bed in a most comfortable inn and slept till noon.

Before going to bed I had written a note to be despatched to Tresethen castle, and the earl's carriage was waiting for me when I awoke. I found myself better than I had expected, and dressing at once for dinner, managed to reach the castle just in time to hand in Lady Tresethen. Of that dinner I but remember that I was the only guest, and that the earl regretted his daughter's absence

from table, Lady Caroline having been thrown that morning from her horse. I fainted somewhere about the second remove, and recovered my wits some days after, on the safe side of the crisis of a fever.

I shall never forget that first half hour of conscious curiosity. An exquisite sense of bodily repose mingled with a vague notion of recent relief from pain, made me afraid to speak lest I should awake from a dream, yet, if not a dream, what a delicious reality! A lady of most noble presence, in a half mourning dress, sat by the side of a cheerful fire, turning her large dark eyes on me, in the pauses of a conversation with a gray-headed servant. My bed was of the most sumptuous luxury; the chamber was hung with pictures and draped with spotless white; the table covered with the costliest elegancies of the toilet; and in the gentle and deferential manner of the old liveried menial, and the subdued tones of inquiry by the lady, there was a refinement and tenderness which, with the keen susceptibility of my senses, "lapt me in Elysium." I was long in remembering where I was. The lady glided from the room, the old servant resumed his seat by my bedside, other servants in the same livery came softly in on errands of service, and, at the striking of the half hour by a clock on the mantelpiece, the lady returned, and I was raised to receive something from her hand. As she came nearer, I remembered the Countess Tresethen.

Three days after this I was permitted to take the air of a conservatory which opened from the countess's boudoir. My old attendant assisted me to dress, and, with another servant, took me down in a *fauteuil*. I was in slippers and robe-de-chambre, and presumed that I should see no one except the kind and noble Lady Tresethen, but I had scarce taken one turn up the long alley of flowering plants, when the countess came toward me from the glass door beyond, and on her arm a girl leaned for support, whose beauty—

(Here Tom dabbled his feet for some minutes in the water in silence.)

God bless me! I can never give you an idea of it! It was a new revelation of woman to me; the opening of an eighth seal. In the minute occupied by her approach, my imagination, (accelerated, as that faculty always is, by the clairvoyance of sickness,) had gone through a whole drama of love—fear, adoration; desperation, and rejection—and so complete was it, that in after moments when these phases of passion came round in the proper lapse of days and weeks, it seemed to me that I had been through with them before; that it was all familiar; that I had met and loved in some other world, this same glorious creature, with the same looks, words, and heart-ache; in the same conservatory of bright flowers, and faith, myself in the same pattern of a brocade dressing-gown!

Heavens! what a beautiful girl was that Lady Caroline! Her eyes were of a light gray, the rim of the lids perfectly inky with the darkness of the

long sweeping lashes, and in her brown hair there was a gold lustre that seemed somehow to illuminate the curves of her small head like a halo. Her mouth had too much character for a perfectly agreeable first impression. It was nobility and sweetness educated over native high spirit and scornfulness—the nature shining through the transparent blood, like a flaw through enamel. She would have been, in other circumstances, a maid of Saragossa or a Gertrude Von Wart; a heroine; perhaps a devil. But her fascination was resistless!

"My daughter," said Lady Tresethen, (and in that beginning was all the introduction she thought necessary,) "is, like yourself, an invalid just escaped from the doctor; you must congratulate each other. Are you strong enough to lend her an arm, Mr. Berryman?"

The countess left us, and with the composure of a sister who had seen me every day of my life, Lady Caroline took my arm and strolled slowly to and fro, questioning me of my shooting at the lodge, and talking to me of her late accident, her eyes sometimes fixed upon her little embroidered slippers, as they peeped from her snowy morning dress, and sometimes indolently raised and brought to bear on my flushed cheek and trembling lips; her singular serenity operating on me as anything but a sedative! I was taken up stairs again, after an hour's conversation, in a fair way for a relapse, and the doctor put me under embargo again for another week, which, spite of all the renewed care and tenderness of Lady Tresethen, seemed to me an eternity! I'll not bother you with what I felt and thought all that time!

It was a brilliant autumnal day when I got leave to make my second exodus, and with the doctor's permission I prepared for a short walk in the park. I declined the convoy of the old servant, for I had heard Lady Caroline's horse gallop away down the avenue, and I wished to watch her return unobserved. I had just lost sight of the castle in the first bend of the path, when I saw her quietly walking her horse under the trees at a short distance, and the moment after she observed and came towards me at an easy canter. I had schooled myself to a little more self-possession, but I was not prepared for such an apparition of splendid beauty as that woman on horseback. She rode an Arabian bay of the finest blood; a lofty, fiery, matchless creature, with an expression of eye and nostril which I could not but think a proper *pendant* to her own, limbed as I had seldom seen a horse, and his arched neck, and forehead, altogether, proud as a steed for Lucifer. She sat on him as if it were a throne she was born to, and the flow of her riding-dress seemed as much a part of him as his mane. He appeared ready to bound into the air, like Pegasus, but one hand calmly stroked his mane, and her face was as tranquil as marble.

"Well met!" she said; "I was just wishing for a cavalier. What sort of a horse would you like, Mr. Berryman? Ellis!" (speaking to her groom) "is old Curtal taken up from grass?"

"Yes, miladi!"

"Curtal is our invalid horse, and as you are not very strong perhaps his easy pace will be best for you. Bring him out directly, Ellis. We'll just walk along the road a little way; for I must show you my Arabian; and we'll not go back to ask mamma's permission, for we shouldn't get it! You won't mind riding a little way, will you?"

Of course I would have bestrided a hippogriff at her bidding, and when the groom came out, leading a thorough-bred hunter, with apparently a very elastic and gentle action, I forgot the doctor and mounted with great alacrity. We walked our horses slowly down the avenue and out at the castle gate, followed by the groom, and after trying a little quicker pace on the public road, I pronounced old Curtal worthy of her ladyship's eulogium, and her own Saladin worthy, if horse could be worthy, of his burthen.

We had ridden perhaps a mile, and Lady Caroline was giving me a slight history of the wonderful feats of the old veteran under me, when the sound of a horn made both horses prick up their ears, and on rising a little acclivity, we caught sight of a pack of hounds coming across the fields directly towards us, followed by some twenty red-coated horsemen. Old Curtal trembled and showed a disposition to fret, and I observed that Lady Caroline dexterously lengthened her own stirrup and loosened the belt of her riding-dress, and the next minute the hounds were over the hedge, and the horsemen, leap after leap, after them, and with every successive jump, my own steed reared and plunged unmanageably.

"Indeed I cannot stand this!" cried Lady Caroline, gathering up her reins, "Ellis! see Mr. Berryman home!" and away went the flying Arabian over the hedge with a vault that left me breathless with astonishment. One minute I made the vain effort to control my own horse and turn his head in the other direction, but my strength was gone. I had never leaped a fence in my life on horseback, though a tolerable rider on the road; but before I could think how it was to be done, or gather myself together for the leap, Curtal was over the hedge with me, and flying across a ploughed field like the wind—Saladin not far before him. With a glance ahead I saw the red coats rising into the air and disappearing over another green hedge, and though the field was crossed in twenty leaps, I had time to feel my blood run cold with the prospect of describing another parabola in the air, and to speculate on the best attitude for a projectile on horseback. Over went Saladin like a greyhound, but his mistress's riding-cap caught the wind at the highest point of the curve, and flew back into my face as Curtal rose on his haunches, and over I went again, blinded and giddy, and, with the cap held flat against my bosom by the pressure of the air, flew once more at a tremendous pace onward. My feet were now plunged to the instep in the stirrups, and my back, too weak to support me erect, let me down to my horse's mane, and one

by, along the skirt of a rising woodland, I could see the red coats dropping slowly behind. Right before me like a meteor, however, streamed back the loosened tresses of Lady Caroline, and Curtal kept close on the track of Saladin, neither losing nor gaining an inch apparently, and nearer and nearer sounded the baying of the hounds, and clearer became my view of the steady and slight waist riding so fearlessly onward. Of my horse I had neither guidance nor control. He needed none. The hounds had crossed a morass, and we were rounding a half-circle on an acclivity to come up with them, and Curtal went at it too confidently to be in error. Even as a hand-gallop on a green sward his tremendous pace told off, and if his was the ease of muscular power, the graceful speed of the beautiful creature moving before me seemed the ærial buoyancy of a bird. Obstructions seemed nothing. That flowing dress and streaming hair sailed over rocks and ditches, and over them, like their inseparable shadow, glided I, and, except one horseman who still kept his distance ahead, we seemed alone in the field. The clatter of hoofs, and the exclamations of excitement had ceased behind me, and though I was capable of no exertion beyond that of keeping my seat, I no longer feared the leap nor the pace, and began to anticipate a safe termination to my perilous adventure. A slight exclamation from Lady Caroline reached my ear and I looked forward. A small river was before us, and, from the opposite bank, of steep clay, the rider who had preceded us was falling back, his horse's fore feet high in the air, and his arms already in the water. I tried to pull my reins. I shouted to my horse in desperation. And with the exertion, my heart seemed to give way within me. Giddy and faint I abandoned myself to my fate. I just saw the flying heels of Saladin planted on the opposite bank and the streaming hair still flying onward, when, with a bound that, it seemed to me, must rend every fibre of the creature beneath me, I saw the water gleam under my feet, and still I kept on. We flew over a fence into a stubble field, the hounds just before us, and over a gate into the public highway, which we followed for a dozen bounds, and then, with a pace slightly moderated, we successively cleared a low wall and brought up, on our horses' haunches, in the midst of an uproar of dogs, cows and scattering poultry—the fox having been run down at last in the enclosure of a barn. I had just strength to extricate my feet from the stirrups, take Lady Caroline's cap, which had kept its place between my elbows and knees, and present it to her as she sat in her saddle, and my legs gave way under me. I was taken into the farm-house, and, at the close of a temporary ellipse, I was sent back to Tresethen Castle in a post-chaise, and once more handed over to the doctor!

Well, my third siege of illness was more tolerable, for I received daily, now, some message of inquiry or some token of interest from Lady Caroline, though I learned from the countess that she

was in sad disgrace for her inveiglement of my trusting innocence. I also received the cards of the members of the hunt, with many inquiries complimentary to what they were pleased to consider American horsemanship, and I found that my seizure of the flying cap of Lady Caroline and presentation of it to her ladyship at "the death," was thought to be worthy, in chivalry of Bayard, and in dexterity of Ducrow. Indeed, when let out again to the convalescent walk in the conservatory, I found that I was counted a hero even by the stately earl. There slipped a compliment, too, here and there, through the matronly disapprobation of Lady Tresethen—and all this was too pleasant to put aside with a disclaimer—so I bid truth and modesty hold their peace, and took the honour the gods chose to provide!

But now came dangers more perilous than my ride on Curtal. Lady Caroline was called upon to be kind to me! Daily as the old servant left me in the alley of japonicas, she appeared from the glass door of her mother's boudoir and devoted herself to my comfort—walking with me, while I could walk, in those fragrant and balmy avenues of flowers, and then bringing me into her mother's luxurious apartment, where books, and music, and conversation as frank and untrammelled as man in love could ask, wiled away the day. Wiled it away?—winged it—shod it with velvet and silence, for I never knew how it passed! Lady Caroline had a mind of the superiority stamped so consciously on her lip. She anticipated no consequences from her kindness, therefore she was playful and unembarrassed. She sang to me, and I read to her. Her rides were given up, and Saladin daily went past the window to his exercise, and with my most zealous scrutiny I could detect in her face neither impatience of confinement nor regret at the loss of weather fitter for pleasures out of doors. Spite of every caution with which hope could be chained down, I was flattered.

You smile—(Tom said, though he was looking straight into the water, and had not seen my face for half an hour)—but, without the remotest hope of taking Lady Caroline to Kentucky, or of becoming English on the splendid dowry of the heiress of Tresethen, I still felt it impossible to escape from my lover's attitude—impossible to avoid hoarding up symptoms, encouragements, flatteries, and all the moonshine of amatory anxiety. I was in love—and who reasons in love?

One morning, after I had become an honorary patient—an invalid only by sufferance—and was slowly admitting the unwelcome conviction that it was time for me to be shaping my adieux—the conversation took rather a philosophical turn. The starting point was a quotation in a magazine from Richter:—"Is not a man's universe *within* his head, whether a king's diadem or a torn scull-cap be *without*?"—and I had insisted rather strenuously on the levelling privilege we enjoyed in the existence of a second world around us—the world of reverie and dream—wherein the tyranny,

and check, and the arbitrary distinctions of the world of fact were never felt—and where he, though he might be a peasant, who had the consciousness in his soul that he was a worthy object of love to a princess, could fancy himself beloved and revel in imaginary possession.

“Why,” said I, turning with a sudden flush of self-confidence to Lady Caroline, “Why should not the passions of such a world, the loving and returning of love *in fancy*, have the privilege of language? Why should not matches be made, love confessed, vows exchanged, and fidelity sworn, valid within the realm of dream-land only? Why should I not say to you, for example, I adore you, dear lady, and in my world of thought you shall, if you will so condescend, be my bride and mistress; and why, if you responded to this and listened to my vows of fancy, should your bridegroom of the world of fact feel his rights invaded?”

“In fancy let it be then!” said Lady Caroline, with a blush and a covert smile, and she rang the bell for luncheon.

Well, I still lingered a couple of days, and on the last day of my stay at Tresethen, I became sufficiently emboldened to take Lady Caroline’s hand behind the fountain of the conservatory, and to press it to my lips with a daring wish that its warm pulses belonged to the world of fancy.

She withdrew it very kindly, and (I thought) sadly, and begged me to go to the boudoir and bring her a volume of Byron that lay on her work table.

I brought it, and she turned over the leaves a moment, and, with her pencil, marked two lines and gave me the book, bidding me an abrupt good morning. I stood a few minutes with my heart beating and my brain faint, but finally summoned courage to read:—

“I cannot lose a world for thee—  
But would not lose thee for the world!”

I left Tresethen the next morning, and ——

“Hold on, Tom!” cried I—“there comes the boat with our dinner from Valletta, and we’ll have your sorrows over our Burgundy.”

“Sorrows!” exclaimed Tom, “I was going to tell you of the fun I had at her wedding!”

“Lord preserve us!”

“Bigamy—was’nt it?—after our little nuptials in dream-land! She told her husband all about it at the wedding breakfast, and his lordship (she married the Marquis of ——) begged to know the extent of *my* prerogatives. I was sorry to confess that they did not interfere very particularly with *his*.”